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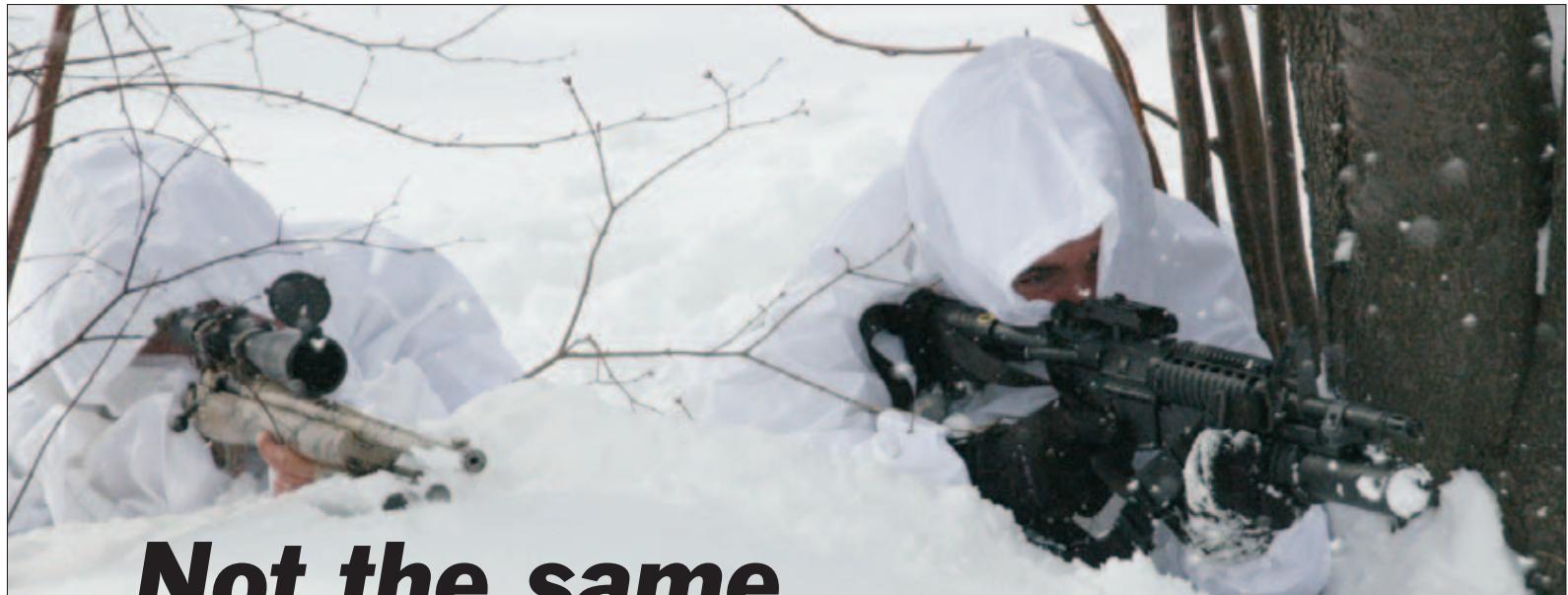


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Not the same old North Wind

U.S., Japanese troops' cold-weather training shifts to offense Page 3

Sgt. Jeff Hubbs, left, and Pfc. Chris Sons with the Kentucky Army National Guard take part in sniper training Monday on Camp Makomanai in Sapporo, Japan.

VINCE LITTLE/Stars and Stripes

House approves mortgage plan

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House has passed legislation to give debt-strapped American homeowners a chance to secure lower mortgage payments through bankruptcy courts.

The vote was 234-191 to approve the measure. It faces a tough road in the Senate, where Republicans and some Democrats oppose the idea.

The bill gives bankruptcy judges new power to reduce the interest rate and principle on a home mortgage. It's part of President Barack Obama's housing rescue plan.

The housing plan is intended to help 9 million struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure, but it leaves out tens of thou-

Hard hit: GM may seek bankruptcy protection Page 9

markets who won't qualify because their homes have lost too much value.

The program offers refinanced mortgages or modified loans with lower monthly payments. Yet its refinancing plan is limited to borrowers who owe up to 5 percent more than their home's current value. Loan modifications, supported by \$75 billion in federal funding, are unlikely for severely "underwater" borrowers.

sands of borrowers in the most battered housing

In the California cities of Stockton, Modesto and Merced, more than one out of every 10 homeowners with a mortgage won't qualify for any help because they owe more than 50 percent more than their house's current value, according to data from real-estate Web site Zillow.com.

The ineligible households are concentrated in speculator-driven markets in California, Florida, Nevada and Arizona, but can also be found in struggling cities such as Detroit and Grand Rapids, Mich. Even houses in the outlying suburbs of the nation's capital, where the economy is relatively healthy, have dropped substantially in value.

SEE LOANS ON PAGE 2



T.O-ver

Cowboys cut Terrell Owens; will anybody take him? Page 36



Army reports 18 suspected suicides for month of February Page 5

No handicap

Amputee golf group helps wounded soldiers get back on course Page 6

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I suppose it's because for so many, many, many years and centuries, men have not married men, and women have not married women."

—Bob Claunch, retired Army sergeant, on why he and his partner, retired Lt. Jack Reavley, have not considered getting married

See story on Page 10

TOP CLICKS ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our Web site:

1. General officer assignments announced
2. Accused stepdad awaits transfer
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4. Anti-malaria drugs limited due to risk
5. Terminal reopens at Kadena

COMING SOON

Perspectives
on Sunday



True
confessions
of a conflicted
money guru

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Former Marine gets 34 months in jail

By CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

OKINAWA CITY, Okinawa — A former Marine who pleaded guilty to illegal entry into a military installation, car theft and other crimes was sentenced in Japanese court Thursday to 34 months in prison with forced labor.

Christopher Chad Hoskins, 28, who is unemployed and no longer falls under the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement, admitted

in earlier hearings that in August he stole items valued at \$970 from a car parked in the Plaza Housing Area.

He admitted he also stole another Marine's car and items inside, valued at \$3,350, according to testimony. In both cases, he gained access to the base by climbing over barbed-wire fences.

He was arrested by military police Aug. 28 when he was spotted peeking inside cars parked in the housing area.

The incident occurred while he was on probation for a 2007 conviction for illegally entering Camp Foster.

Hoskins was also found guilty Thursday of breaking into the Jehovah's Witness Church in Kitakanagasaki in November 2006, stealing 16 items including TV sets, valued at \$5,760. Hoskins' DNA matched that of blood left on a glass cabinet in the church.

During the sentencing, Judge Takashi Sakakibara called the

nature of Hoskins's offenses malicious and habitual.

"In less than nine months of your conviction of the 2007 theft, you repeated the same offenses," Sakakibara said.

But Sakakibara said the court took into consideration that Hoskins' Japanese wife promised the court to support her husband and will be there for him when he returns from prison.

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Loans: Some say banks may be unwilling to participate

LOANS, FROM PAGE 1

For a homeowner who borrowed \$380,000 and now has a house worth \$270,000, "I just don't know what you do with that," said Jared Martin, a mortgage broker in Bethesda, Md.

Government officials acknowledge that the initiatives are only a partial fix for a sweeping problem that has helped plunge the U.S. economy into the worst recession in decades.

"This is not going to save every person's home," said Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary. "The plan is not intended to ... augment somebody's loan for a house that they couldn't afford under any economic situation, good or bad."

Of the nearly 52 million U.S. homeowners with a mortgage, almost 14 million, or nearly 27 percent, owe more on their mortgage than their house is now worth, according to Moody's Economy.com.

Nearly half of all borrowers in Nevada were "under water" on their home loans as of Decem-

Jobless claims dip, defaults rise Page 8

ber, according to First American CoreLogic.

In troubled Stockton, nearly one in five borrowers owe more than 50 percent above what their home is now worth, making it unlikely they will qualify for any aid.

Though banks such as JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo & Co. issued statements praising the plan, there was also skepticism that banks would be willing to participate.

"I've just seen so many of the programs not work," said Pava Leyrer, president of Heritage National Mortgage in Grandville, Mich. "It gets borrowers' hopes up. They call and call for these programs and we can't get anybody to do them."

The program has two parts: one to work with lenders to modify the loan terms for up to 4 million homeowners, the second to refinance up to 5 million homeowners into more affordable fixed-rate loans.

For the modification program, which runs through 2012, borrowers who are eligible will have to provide their most recent tax return and two pay stubs, as well as an "affidavit of financial hardship" to qualify. In the affidavit, applicants will have to cite the reasons behind their financial woes, such as job loss or a drop in income. The government will then take steps to verify the



JAE C. HONG/AP

The Obama administration's housing plan is intended to help nine million struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure, but it leaves out tens of thousands of borrowers in the most battered housing markets who won't qualify because their homes have lost too much value. The ineligible households are concentrated in speculator-driven markets.

information.

Borrowers are only allowed to have their loans modified once, and the program applies for loans made on Jan. 1, 2009, or earlier. Mortgages for single-family properties that are worth more than \$729,750 are excluded.

Lenders could reduce a bor-

rrower's interest rate to as low as 2 percent for five years. Rates would then rise to about 5 percent until the mortgage is repaid.

The refinance program is only offered to homeowners with loans held by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. They have until June 2010 to apply.

Correction

A March 6 story should have said the renovation of the Air Mobility Command passenger terminal at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, took a year to complete.

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Pfc. Chris Sons plants himself in the snow during sniper training.

Nearly 1,100 U.S., Japanese troops train together in the waist-deep Sapporo snow

BY VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

SAPPORO, Japan — When it comes to defending Japan, the U.S. Army doesn't have massive infantry and tactical units sitting idly around the country, waiting to act if hostilities broke out.

But U.S. Army Japan leaders can certainly bring them over right away for the fight.

That process played out on a smaller scale this week at North Wind, a field exercise under way in waist-deep snow on training ranges near Camp Makomanai in Hokkaido. About 400 U.S. soldiers and 700 troops from Japan's northern army are taking part — including those in support roles.

"For us, it's not the tactical piece as much as site-scene management," said Lt. Col. Paul Horlacher, USARJ's chief of exercises. "We can actually glean the command-and-control element and logistical tasks we'd have in theater if we had to go to war. We have to bring forces in and sustain them as part of our RSOI (receive, stage, onward integration) mission."

The unit toting the arsenal for USARJ during North Wind is the Kentucky Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment — a combat-seasoned unit that served a year in Iraq in 2006-07. About 300 soldiers came to Japan for the exercise.

"It's a great opportunity for our soldiers. You can see their enthusiasm," said Col. Scott Campbell, commander of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "We could only bring 300. The battalion left 500 at home."

Alongside the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, the guardsmen — wrapped up in white, cold-weather ponchos — are living in tents and trudging through heavy snow as they practice passing through enemy lines, estab-



lishing perimeters and attacking objectives. They're also engaged in mock sniper operations and ski training.

Unlike past years, when U.S. and Japanese units faced the same regimen but advanced separately on targets, North Wind 2009 features "fully integrated" scenarios, Horlacher said.

"They are a relevant, current, forward-thinking military," he said of the JGSDF. "Sometimes, we think we have coined the right way of doing things, but we have to adjust that view."

Previous North Wind drills were built exclusively around, for instance, defensive measures reacting to "attacks" on Hokkaido, according to Horlacher.

"Over time, it's evolved into missions more offensive in nature, but that's only part of the grander scheme in our defense of Japan," he said.

For the 1-149 infantry battal-

ion, this week's exercise offered a chance to refine combat skills alongside a key U.S. ally. Many of the American troops in North Wind also have completed tours to Afghanistan, Bosnia and the Horn of Africa.

"Our young soldiers are excited about walking around with combat patches on their arms," said Lt. Col. Michael Abell, 1-149's commander. "We took on this deployment because we want to be a great unit — not just do a small stint once a year back home."

The National Guard is breaking recruiting records right now, and Kentucky is among the leading states, according to Campbell.

"These 300 soldiers get to go to Japan, train with the JGSDF and fire their weapons in 4-foot-deep snow," he said. "You don't retain soldiers by giving them nothing to do."

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SHARPENING WARTIME SKILLS AT NORTH WIND



PHOTOS BY VINCE LITTLE/Stars and Stripes

Above: Spc. Joseph Liford of the Kentucky Army National Guard plays his banjo earlier this week for U.S. and Japanese troops.

Left: About 300 Kentucky National Guardsmen are participating in North Wind 2009, which began earlier this week in Sapporo, Japan.

Kentucky brigade awaits word on 2011 deployment

BY VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

SAPPORO, Japan — The Kentucky Army National Guard's 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade will likely mobilize in 2011, its commander says.

Col. Scott Campbell said his unit has been notified but won't hear about a specific mission or destination until roughly a year out.

There's speculation it may be headed to Afghanistan, where a buildup of U.S. troops is expected as President Barack Obama moves ahead with his plan to draw down nearly two-thirds of American forces in Iraq by August 2010.

About 300 soldiers from the brigade's 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment are here this week for North Wind, a field ex-

ercise being conducted alongside 700 troops from Japan's northern army near Camp Makomanai on Hokkaido.

The entire 1-149th, which now numbers 844, was in Iraq from September 2006 to September 2007, according to Lt. Col. Michael Abell, the unit's commander.

The Kentucky Guard's maneuver enhancement brigade carries more than 2,300 soldiers — and 80 percent have served in a war zone, he added. Most have been downrange at least twice.

"We're an infinitely more professional force since 9/11," Abell said. "We have soldiers who are no longer apprehensive about war."

Campbell, a 28-year veteran of the Guard, says he never deployed until 2003.

SEE DEPLOY ON PAGE 4

North Korea, U.N. slated to restart talks

BY JIMMY NORRIS
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL — North Korean and United Nations Command representatives were slated to sit down at the negotiating table Friday for another round of general officer-level talks at Panmunjom, according to a UNC news release.

The talks — a follow to Monday's talks initiated by the North in an effort to ease growing tensions on the peninsula — were

proposed by UNC officials during the last meeting.

Monday's meeting, the first of its kind in seven years, ended without resolution, according to a story by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, and focused mainly on the upcoming Key Resolve/Foal Eagle exercise.

"The purpose of the meetings is to discuss practical, armistice-related issues, reaffirm commitment to the general officer forum and reduce tension on the

Korean peninsula," the release said.

The UNC delegation for Friday's talks was to be headed by Air Force Maj. Gen. Johnny Weida, who also led the UNC delegation during Monday's talks.

In preparation for the discussions, a 44-minute meeting between UNC and North Korean colonels was held Thursday to set Friday's agenda and establish protocol, the release said.

According to spokesman Dave Palmer, the UNC colonel at the meeting was Col.

Kurt Taylor. He was unable to identify the North Korean colonel.

Palmer expressed optimism over the resumption of general officer-level discussions.

"It's always good when they're talking," he said. "We welcome it."

Friday's meeting would be the 16th round of general officer talks since the practice began in 1998.

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Pyongyang threatens S. Korean plans as exercises draw near

BY JAE-SOON CHANG
The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea threatened South Korean passenger planes flying near its airspace on Thursday and accused the U.S. and South Korea of attempting to provoke a nuclear war with upcoming joint military drills.

In response, South Korea's Korean Air and Asiana Airlines rerouted their flights to stay clear of North Korean airspace, the Yonhap news agency reported.

The threat from North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland comes four days before annual U.S.-South Korean exercises are to begin across South Korea and amid concerns the North is preparing to test-fire a long-range ballistic missile.

The North is "compelled to declare that security cannot be guaranteed for South Korean civil airplanes flying through the territorial air of our side and its vicinity ... while the military exercises are under way," the committee said in statement carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

It did not say what kind of danger South Korean planes would face or whether the threat means the North would shoot down planes. It was also unclear whether the statement was a warning to clear the air before a possible missile launch.

Analysts said there is little chance North Korea would shoot down planes because it knows such a move would lead to a full-scale war, and said the threat was aimed at escalating tensions.

The North is "exercising all its brinksmanship," said Kim Sung-han, an international relations professor at Seoul's Korea University. "I would say it's just rhetoric for now."

South Koreans, however, still vividly remember a North Korean bomb that exploded on a Korean Air flight in 1987, killing all 115 people on board, and another Korean Air jet that was shot down by a Soviet fighter jet in 1983, killing all 269 people aboard.

North Korea has railed for days against the U.S.-South Korean military drills at a time of mounting tensions on the Korean peninsula.

The U.S. military said it would go ahead with the drills involving 26,000 U.S. troops, an unspecified number of South Korean soldiers and a U.S. aircraft carrier. Both Washington and Seoul insist the annual exercises are purely defensive, not preparations for an invasion as the North claims.

Stepping up the rhetoric ahead of the second meeting, North Korea said the drills would constitute a "criminal act against peace" and were "aimed at bringing the dark clouds of a nuclear war to hang over

South Korean protesters burn a North Korean flag during a rally in Seoul against North Korea's recent military policy. North Korea threatened South Korean passenger planes flying near its airspace on Thursday and accused the U.S. and South Korea of attempting to provoke a nuclear war with upcoming joint military drills.

the Korean peninsula."

North Korea announced last week that it is preparing to send a communications satellite into space but regional powers suspect the claim is a cover for the launch

of a long-range missile capable of reaching Alaska.

Analysts say satellite images show brisk activity at the launch site in North Korea's northeast.

Deploy: Despite culture shock, all eyes are focused on the mission

DEPLOY, FROM PAGE 3

Since then, he's been to Bosnia and Iraq.

The Guard's transformation from a "strategic reserve to an operational reserve was significant," he added.

"It was a Cold War formation, but you can't plan the way you did back then," he said. "You're not going to see the threat coming today. Our biggest change is the enhanced readiness. Brigades no longer have weeks or months before they're called to the fight. You might have to go within 96 hours."

The increased operations tempo has been challenging, Campbell conceded.

"But we're not at a breaking point," he said. "The camaraderie, teamwork, morale — it takes it to a new level when you're in a combat zone."

Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's 18th Infantry Regiment — participants in this year's North Wind exercise — wouldn't even check out the bait.

"That's a decision for the government of Japan. Our job is to execute the missions we're given," he said through a translator. "Whether we go to Afghanistan or not is not something I can answer. ... Operations in the defense of Japan are first and foremost."

A lot of snow

Snowfall isn't uncommon around Kentucky in the winter, but it pales by comparison to the whopping drifts that greeted the 1-149 Infantry Battalion's arrival in Sapporo, which, of course, is home to a world-famous snow festival each February.

"I'm definitely not used to this snow," said Sgt. Jeff Hubbs, 27, of Barbourville, Ky., a sniper. "We get a couple inches back home, but not the increments they get."

Staff Sgt. Tony Duncan, the scout platoon sergeant, said he's "amazed" by how much snow is on the ground.

"Japan is totally different than what I thought it would be," said Duncan, 38, of Somerset, Ky. "It resembles one of

the mountain states. If I was just driving through, not paying attention to the signs, I'd think I was in Montana."

First time outside the U.S.

The U.S. infantry battalion taking part in North Wind took a whirlwind journey to Japan.

Last Saturday, the group left Lexington, Ky., for Minneapolis and then made two stops in Alaska before landing at Narita International Airport. Then came the flight to Hokkaido, followed by an hourlong bus ride to Camp Makomanai on Sunday night.

For Pfc. Chris Sons, 20, a sniper, it marked his first trip ever outside the continental United States.

"It's been different, for sure, getting used to the culture change," the Irvin, Ky., native said. "I woke up at 2:30 a.m. that first night."

Now, he's contemplating a possible down-range deployment in two years.

"You never know where you're gonna be fighting at ... Anything can happen. Hopefully, I'll be ready," Sons said. "In some parts of Afghanistan, the climate is very, very cold. This will help out a whole lot."

A banjo on his knee

Uniforms? Check.

Cold-weather gear? Check.

M-16? Check.

Ammunition? Check.

Banjo?

Apparently, Spc. Joseph Liford showed up at North Wind earlier this week with the famed instrument as well. Apparently, he just couldn't leave Kentucky without it.

Late Monday afternoon, as U.S. and Japanese troops spent a final night at Camp Makomanai before heading off to live in tents for a week, Liford broke out the banjo for an impromptu jam session — bluegrass-style.

"What kind of music is this?" asked Sgt. 1st Class Kenichi Tanaka, among about two dozen Japanese troops who quickly gathered around.

After a half-hour of listening, he answered his own question before leaving with a small group of Japanese troops.

"Nice music," Tanaka said. "Very excellent."

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Col. Kenji Sawai, commander of the



AHN YOUNG-JOON/AP

Pirate attacks down, but concerns linger

By LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Despite a drop in attacks in recent months, lawmakers on Thursday expressed concern that not enough legal penalties exist to keep poor fishermen from pursuing piracy as a profitable career.

"It has become a business," said Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss. "And I think we need to take steps to address this before it gets even more out of hand."

Defense officials told members of the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday that improved anti-piracy efforts by the international community have led to a drop in piracy since the height of attacks last summer.

Vice Adm. William Gortney,

head of U.S. Central Command's Naval Forces, said there were more than 293 pirate attacks worldwide last year, with 111 of them occurring in the Gulf of Aden or off the east coast of Somalia. So far in 2009, attacks have continued at about half that rate, with 26 through January and February.

Gortney credited increased naval presence near Somalia — ships and personnel from 18 countries have been patrolling the region since August — and security improvements by private shipping firms for some of the decrease.

"But ultimately piracy is a problem that starts ashore and requires an international solution ashore," he told the lawmakers. "We made it clear at the outset of



Vice Adm. William Gortney

our efforts that we cannot guarantee safety in this vast region."

Fixing the problem, defense and state department officials said, includes not only stabilizing Somalia's economy but also determining how to prosecute and jail pirates caught in the act.

Lawmakers said they'd consider strengthening or updating U.S.

code to allow U.S. justice officials to prosecute pirates who attack American ships anywhere in the world, but questioned if U.S. courts would be the best place to pursue such cases.

No international court exists to handle piracy suspects, according to Stephen Mull, acting undersecretary for international security at the State Department. Instead, the U.S. and other nations have been working with African governments to see how suspects could be tried and imprisoned there.

On Thursday, the Navy handed over seven suspected pirates to Kenya for prosecution, after they were caught trying to hijack a ship in the Gulf of Aden. It's the first attempt by the international task force to put suspects on trial

in regional courts.

But Rep. Jim Marshall, D-Ga., asked if the threat of jail time would be enough to discourage pirates when a successful hijacking can earn them millions. He asked State Department officials if private shipping companies should be hiring security firms to lure and attack would-be hijackers, "increasing the cost for pirates" in the region.

Karl Wycoff, acting deputy assistant secretary for African affairs at the State Department, discouraged the idea, saying it could encourage pirates to become more aggressive in their attacks and goes against "our attempts to try and build respect for the rule of law in the region."

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Judge upholds verdicts in Fort Dix case

CAMDEN, N.J. — A judge in New Jersey has upheld guilty verdicts against five Muslim immigrants convicted last year of plotting to massacre U.S. soldiers.

The men's lawyers argued that the federal government's claims against their clients were not supported by evidence.

But a federal judge in Camden disagreed and has ruled the jury was right to convict them in December. He said the men received a fair trial.

The government says the men discussed attacking soldiers on the Army's Fort Dix. The men say they didn't seriously plan anything and they were manipulated by two paid FBI informants.

The men could get life in prison at sentencing next month.

Army captain charged with stealing \$690,000

PORTLAND, Ore. — An Army captain has been charged with stealing nearly \$700,000 from the government while he was serving in Iraq.

A federal grand jury in Portland indicted Capt. Michael Dung Nguyen on charges of theft of government property, money laundering and structuring financial transactions.

The indictment alleges that between April 2007 and February, the 28-year-old Nguyen stole more than \$690,000 in U.S. currency entrusted to him as the battalion civil affairs officer in Muqdadiah, Iraq.

RAF Fairford fuel spill larger than thought

RAF FAIRFORD, England — About 27,500 gallons of fuel spilled from a storage facility at RAF Fairford on Feb. 25, much higher than previously thought, Air Force officials said this week.

Initially, the Air Force estimated about 3,000 gallons spilled when an alarm and shut-off switch malfunctioned in the pump house of a fuel storage facility.

The figure is also more than initial British Environment Agency estimates of about 17,000 gallons.

An EA spokeswoman said Thursday that the agency will stick by its initial estimate until its investigation is complete.

While the fuel did flood the pump house and spill out beyond the earthen containment site and into a nearby ditch, only about 50 gallons leaked off base into a nearby waterway, according to Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett, a spokeswoman for the 501st Combat Support Wing, which is in charge of Fairford.

Atsugi to celebrate Cherry Blossom Festival

Naval Air Facility Atsugi will host its Cherry Blossom Festival on March 28.

The festival, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be open to the public, according to a news release.

Food will be available for purchase, and entertainment will include games and performances by at least two bands. No pets, bicycles, skateboards, coolers, large bags or glass containers are permitted, according to the release. For more information, call DSN 264-4455.

Atsugi to hold tryouts for talent show

Naval Air Facility Atsugi will host a talent show from 6 to 9 p.m. April 18 at Club Trilogy for SOFA-sponsored members 18 years or older.

Tryouts will be held at Club Trilogy from March 23 to April 3. Tryout times will be determined according to each performer's availability, base officials said.

All genres of talent are encouraged, including singing, dancing and comedy. All performers must provide their own props and equipment. The winner will be awarded an entertainment contract to perform at MWR-sponsored venues for \$250 a performance. The runner-up will receive a Microsoft Zune MP3 player and the third-place finisher will receive a free overnight stay at the New Sanno Hotel in Tokyo.

For more information call, DSN 264-3782 or e-mail Keith Reynolds at Keith.Reynolds@fe.navy.mil.

From Staff and wire reports

Army: 18 suspected GI suicides during February

After 24 in January, monthly reports shine light on issue

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After an alarming spike in soldier suicides in January, the Army said Thursday there were another 18 suspected suicides last month.

The increase continues a four-year rise in an Army under stress from two wars.

"It's a very high number, it's very disturbing," Col. Thomas Languirand, head of the Army suicide prevention program, said of February's toll. "We're taking every effort we can think of" to try to bring it down.

The Army normally releases figures on self-inflicted deaths only once a year. But due to the large number of 24 suspected in January, officials decided to announce monthly figures to focus attention on the problem and on prevention programs available.

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli said there were two confirmed suicides in February and 16 suspected but still being investigated — compared with 11 confirmed deaths in the same month of 2008.

Usually the vast majority of suspected suicides are eventually confirmed, but the investigations can take months. For instance, when January figures were first released last month, officials said there were seven confirmed and 17 pending, a figure updated Thursday to 12 confirmed and 12

pending.

Speaking by telephone to a group of bloggers, Chiarelli noted that officials already have bolstered suicide prevention programs and are having special training sessions this month and next, but he said no one thing can solve the problem.

The military has added mental health staff, operates hot lines for troops to call, and has programs to counter stress on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan. There was no breakdown on how many of the suicides happened at the warfront.

Amid unprecedented stress on the military in fighting the wars, troops are having difficulty keeping their marriages and personal relationships together and are suffering financial, legal and work problems. Officials over months have pointed to these as main reasons for the increased suicides, and Chiarelli said Thursday that unemployment also seemed a factor in February suicides among National Guard and Reserve members.

Chiarelli updated figures for 2008, saying 138 suicides had been confirmed and five deaths were still being investigated. He said it appears the Army will see a rate of 20.5 suicides per 100,000, surpassing the civilian rate for the first time since record keeping began in 1980.

The civilian rate is about 19.5 per 100,000 when adjusted to mirror the gender and age mix in the Army.

13 Marines injured in N.C. bus crash

Stars and Stripes

Thirteen Marines with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit were injured Thursday when three buses carrying them crashed in North Carolina, said 22nd MEU spokesman Capt. Clark Carpenter.

The Marines were on their way to Norfolk, Va., to conduct a final training exercise before deploying this spring to the U.S. European Command and Central Command regions as a theater reserve force, Carpenter said.

Carpenter said a bus driver was critically injured and airlifted to a hospital after the crash. He said

none of the Marines was seriously hurt. The injured Marines are being treated at Naval Hospital, Camp Lejeune, where the unit is based.

Thursday's crash will not delay the exercise, which is scheduled for March 10, Carpenter said. It also will not affect the unit's upcoming deployment.

Authorities say the wreck occurred about 20 miles north of Camp Lejeune on U.S. Highway 17 near Maysville. Carpenter said investigators believe the third bus failed to stop for traffic and collided with the bus it was following.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Back in the swing



RALPH BARRERA, AUSTIN AMERICAN STATESMAN/AP

Sgt. James Oppelt hits a golf ball on Feb. 23 at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club in San Antonio. The National Amputee Golf Association's First Swing Clinic came to the driving range to teach wounded soldiers the game of golf. The military plans to introduce First Swing at seven installations and eventually train every pro at the Army's 55 golf courses.

First Swing program is bringing amputees back to the golf course

BY KEVIN ROBBINS

Austin (Texas) American-Statesman

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — A roadside bomb near Baghdad led Ryan Clark back to golf.

The 28-year-old Army infantryman from Ohio suffered a badly damaged left leg in 2007 when an improvised explosive device blew up near his vehicle in Iraq. The injury brought Clark to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, where much of his leg was removed. On a bright and breezy Monday three months later, he dressed for his first formal lesson in how to swing a short iron.

Wearing a gray Army T-shirt and with a sport shoe on his prosthetic leg, Clark slapped a few nicked balls down the practice range at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club. One shot soared in a high, piercing arc over the 100-yard sign. Another sliced inelegantly into a net.

Clark, who had played only a handful of times in his life, tried to explain the difference between playing golf on two feet and playing it on one.

"I'm not sure yet," he said. "That's really all the goal is: to relearn how to play."

Representatives from the National Amputee Golf Association this year teamed up with the military to introduce service personnel such as Clark to First Swing, a program designed to involve amputees in golf.

First Swing representatives visited Fort Sam Houston recently.

They began by helping a dozen golf professionals learn to teach golf to players who are missing limbs.

They instructed the pros to hit balls with one hand and standing on one leg — for perspective.

"We were hitting and hopping," said Paul Martocci, a golf pro from Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Martocci met a young, eager soldier

Monday at the far end of the range. The soldier, a newcomer to golf, could barely operate his right leg because he'd stepped on a grenade.

Seated in a golf cart made for amputee players, he took swing after swing. The soldier dribbled balls along the ground until, at last, he lofted one into the morning chill.

The soldier smiled. The small First Swing crowd applauded — the tradition for a first airborne shot.

"I know we made a golfer down there," Martocci said later. "I know we did."

Trace Kea, a golf pro for the Army, loves to hear that kind of sentiment. He recited the staggering suicide statistics — a record 24 members of the Army in January alone.

Then Kea watched Clark and a lean former squad leader from Oregon take swings.

"If they get hooked today, they're going to come back," Kea said. "They'll live another day, another week, another month."

The military plans to introduce First Swing at seven installations, including Fort Sam Houston. Kea said he plans eventually to train every pro at the Army's 55 golf courses.

His goal: to introduce golf to soldiers who might think a lost limb is a lost life.

"If they're not doing this, what are they doing? How many times can you watch SportsCenter?" Kea said.

First Swing was created nearly two decades ago by a former naval officer named Bob Wilson.

Working on the flight deck of the USS Kitty Hawk when a jet landed, Wilson lost his legs in 1974 to the cable that stops aircraft as they land on the carrier.

While recovering, Wilson saw an article about amputee golf. He said he didn't even know amputee golf was possible. He took it up. He found something to look forward to, and he's been playing since.

"It's the only thing that kept me alive,"



Golf professional Mark Sanders, with the National Amputee Golf Association's First Swing Clinic, works on Feb. 23 with Staff Sgt. Rico Roman of Oregon at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club in San Antonio. Roman was injured in Iraq by an improvised explosive device during patrol. Roman is rehabbing at Brooke Army Medical Center.

Wilson said.

First Swing representatives say golf is an ideal therapy for amputees. It involves stretching. It involves exercise, mental and physical.

"It's moving the body," said Rick Monroe, a regional trustee for the amputee golf organization and a resident of Onion Creek. "Moving the muscles, whatever muscles they have, is worth it."

Down the range, Rico Roman, the squad leader from Oregon, braced his weight against his prosthetic left leg. He turned, pivoted and pounded a driver through the

wind.

The ball rose.

Roman lost his leg when an IED burst near his Humvee in Iraq. Now 28 and continuing his therapy at Brooke, he said he never considered what he might no longer be capable of doing.

"I was just thinking about all the things I was going to be doing," he said.

Like golf.

Roman watched his drive. It was straight and true, past the first sign on the range.

It was perfect.

"I got it over the hundred," Roman said.

Kyrgyz leader says U.S. still can save Manas

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO
Stars and Stripes

Kyrgyzstan's president said in a BBC interview that "the doors are not closed" on the possibility of the U.S. military negotiating to keep open Manas Air Base.

The vital supply base for U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan is set to close in August, after the Kyrgyz government voted last month to shut it down. But on Wednesday, the British Broadcasting Corp. aired an interview with Kurmanbek Bakiyev in which he said, "We are ready for any new proposals from the U.S. government aimed at stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan."

Bakiyev also seemed to openly play Rus-

sia and the U.S. off of one another, saying, "Our partners — be it the United States or Russia — should listen to what we have to say."

"We decided to close the base because our proposals have been ignored for years and I don't consider such relations as being equal."

The decision to close Manas came the same week Russia pledged more than \$2 billion in loans and aid to the former Soviet republic. The move was seen as the latest salvo in renewed Central Asian competition between the former Cold War foes.

Bakiyev told the BBC that negotiations with the U.S. would have to take a "different format."

Shortly after the Kyrgyz parliament

signed the bill closing Manas, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, "I continue to believe this is not a closed issue, and that there remains the potential to reopen this issue. But we are developing alternative methods of getting resupply and people into Afghanistan."

Those alternate supply routes include passing through Uzbekistan, which hosted a U.S. logistics base until 2005, when international condemnation over Uzbekistan's human rights record strained tensions.

Supply lines into Afghanistan have been pinched, with repeated militant attacks on routes leading from Pakistan. President Barack Obama has announced the deployment of an additional 17,000 troops to Afghanistan this summer, and his admin-

istration is in the midst of a review of the war, which began in October 2001.

Manas is around a two-hour flight from Kabul, and some 15,000 passengers pass through Manas each month on their way in and out of Afghanistan, the U.S. Air Force has said. Officials have said rent paid by the U.S. for the base amounts to around \$17 million annually.

Some 1,000 U.S. servicemembers live at the base, along with 100 Spanish and French troops.

Under the eviction notice issued by the Kyrgyz government in February, the U.S. military would have until mid-August to vacate Manas.

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An Iraqi man stands at the site of a car bomb attack on a crowded cattle market Thursday in Hillah, south of Baghdad. The blast killed at least 13 people and wounded dozens.

ALAA AL-MARJANI/AP

13 people die in Iraq market blast

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A car bomb exploded Thursday in a crowded livestock market selling sheep, cattle and goats south of Baghdad, killing at least 13 people and wounding dozens, Iraqi police and medical officials said.

The parked car exploded at the height of the morning buying and selling at the market on the outskirts of Hillah, 60 miles south of Baghdad, said Iraqi police Maj. Muthana Khalid. The blast scattered bodies and animal carcasses throughout the market, a witness said.

While violence has declined dramatically in Iraq during the past 18 months, there are concerns about a possible upward trend in bloodshed after a

series of high-profile attacks on civilians and U.S. and Iraqi security forces in recent weeks.

All the dead and injured in Thursday's bombing were civilians, Khalid said.

Dr. Ahmed al-Hasnawi, from the Hillah General Hospital, said 60 people were wounded but two of them died after being taken to the hospital.

The U.S. military put the casualty toll at 10 dead and 56 wounded.

Markets, mosques and religious shrines have been a favorite target of insurgents in Iraq because of the possibility of high casualty counts.

The market operates daily but is at its busiest on Thursdays and Fridays, said cattle merchant Rajab Abdul-Hussein.

Two Afghans announce candidacies

BY JEFF SCHOGOL
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Afghan president Hamid Karzai now faces at least two political rivals who will try to unseat him later this year.

Ashraf Ghani, former Afghan finance minister, said he will run in Afghanistan's upcoming presidential election.

"I am committed to running in a free and fair election to be held in August but will declare formally when the legal situation is clear," Ghani said in an e-mail to Stars and Stripes.

Ghani did not say what "legal situation" exists, but at the time there was an internal debate in Afghani-

stan about whether to hold the election in August or in April or May.

Karzai also will face Anwar Ul-haq Ahadi, who resigned as finance minister Thursday to run in the presidential election, according to Agence France-Presse.

Media reports had named Ghani as a potential contender in Afghanistan's presidential election, but he told Stripes last month that he intended to stay out of the Afghan government unless conditions in Afghanistan deteriorated.

"The more difficult it is, the closer it's going to get me to a positive decision," he said. "Politics is a vocation; it's moral responsibility. When things become very difficult, I need to be there. That's why I went back after 24 years, after 9/11."

Former interior minister Ali Ahmad Jalali also has been mentioned in media reports as a possible contender in the election.

Now on the faculty of the National Defense University, Jalali said Thursday he is leaning toward running, but he will make a final decision after he goes to Afghanistan next week.

He told Stripes in February that he was under pressure to run.

"In media, in tribal areas, in cities, and universities, they are calling on me, and it has reached a point where I cannot say outrightly no, but I have to weigh my options very soon and make a decision," Jalali said.

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Iraqi parliament passes \$58.6 billion budget

BAGHDAD — Iraq's parliament passed a \$58.6 billion budget Thursday after agreeing to sharp cuts amid falling oil prices.

The budget was approved after political blocs reached a compromise to break a weeks-long deadlock, according to Sami al-Atroushi, a member of the parliament's finance committee.

He said lawmakers agreed to further cut the budget by about \$4 billion. The government's original spending proposal was about \$79 billion but it already had faced an earlier round of cuts as oil prices dipped from a mid-July high of \$150 to under \$45.

From The Associated Press

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IN THE STATES

Jobless claims, benefits decline slightly

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of new jobless claims and the total number of people receiving unemployment benefits both dropped more than expected last week, though they remain at elevated levels and are unlikely to fall substantially in the coming months.

Few economists expect a turnaround in the battered labor market anytime soon with companies laying off thousands of workers weekly.

Still, the tally of initial requests for unemployment benefits fell to 639,000 from the previous week's figure of 670,000, the Labor Department said Thursday. Analysts expected a smaller drop to 650,000.

In separate reports, factory orders fell for a record sixth consecutive month in January, the Commerce Department said, as demand fell across a wide cross-section of industries. And worker productivity fell more steeply than previously estimated in the fourth quarter, the Labor Department said.

Retailers, meanwhile, said sales dropped in February but at a slower pace than the previous month.

The stock markets, already trading lower, extended their decline after the factory orders report. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 132 points, or 1.9 percent, while broader indexes also fell.

The 670,000 new job claims total reported a week ago was a new high for the current recession and the most since October 1982, when the economy was emerging from a severe downturn, though the labor force has grown by half since then.

The number of people claiming benefits for more than a week fell slightly to 5.1 million in the latest report from 5.12 million, after rising to record highs for five straight weeks. Analysts expected 5.15 million continuing claims.

But an additional 1.4 million people were receiving benefits under an extended unemployment compensation program approved by Congress last year.

That's up sharply from a year ago, when 2.8 million people were receiving benefits.

The first swing set



CHARLES DHARAPAK/AP

A newly installed swing and play set for President Barack Obama's daughters, Malia and Sasha, is seen on the south grounds of the White House outside the Oval Office on Wednesday. Obama and his wife, Michelle, surprised the girls with the swing set after school Wednesday.

Increased defaults fuel housing crisis

By J.W. ELPHINSTONE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A stunning 48 percent of the nation's homeowners who have a subprime, adjustable-rate mortgage are behind on their payments or in foreclosure, and that's not the worst of it, new data Thursday showed.

The reckless lending practices in states like Florida, California and Nevada that were the epicenter of the housing crisis are no longer driving up the nation's delinquency rate. Instead, the foreclosure crisis now is being fueled by a spike in defaults in states like Louisiana, New York, Georgia and Texas, where the economies are rapidly deteriorating and thousands are losing their jobs.

A record 5.4 million American homeowners with a mortgage of any kind, or nearly 12 percent, were at least one month late or in foreclosure at the end of last year,

the Mortgage Bankers Association reported. That's up from 10 percent at the end of the third quarter, and up from 8 percent at the end of 2007.

Prime and subprime fixed-rate loans saw sharp increases in the fourth quarter, a sign that the problem is now the economy.

"We're seeing increases in fixed-rate categories and that's where the problems are coming from," said Jay Brinkmann, the group's chief economist.

"The foreclosure picture is more clearly driven by the jobs market."

That trend highlights one of the biggest challenges confronting the Obama administration's mortgage relief plan launched this week. While the \$75 billion plan could help change the loan terms or refinance up to 9 million homeowners, unemployed borrowers will have a hard time qualifying.

Obama seeks health care input from allies, skeptics

By LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama summoned allies, skeptics and health care figures of all stripes to the White House on Thursday to debate ideas for overhauling the nation's costly system and declared, "The status quo is the one option that is not on the table."

The big Washington session — Obama called it a health care summit — and meetings to follow around the country show the new president's push for universal health care coverage will be more open and inclusive than the Clinton administration's failed attempt of 15 years ago.

"In this effort, every voice has to be heard. Every idea must be considered. ... There should be no sacred cows," Obama said as he opened his White House forum on what he calls the greatest threat to the U.S. economy — rising health

care costs. Mindful that opponents derailed the Clinton plan, Obama also issued a warning: "Those who seek to block any reform at all, any reform at any cost, will not prevail this time around."

The U.S. system is the world's costliest; the country spends some \$2.4 trillion a year on health care. It leaves an estimated 48 million people uninsured, and many others lack adequate insurance.

Although he wants coverage

for all, the president suggested a willingness to compromise. That, too, was a break from former President Bill Clinton's posture in the 1990s when he promised to veto any health care measure that didn't give him what he sought.

This time, Obama said, "Each of us must accept that none of us will get everything we want, and no proposal for reform will be perfect."

"While everyone has a right to

take part in this discussion, no one has the right to take it over."

At the same time, he blasted "those who say we should defer health care reform once again" even though, unlike the last time, there's widespread agreement that something needs to be done. He also called health care reform both a moral imperative, and now a fiscal imperative because of its huge stress on the nation's financial books. He blamed Washington

politics and industry lobbying for past failures, while pledging to put the public's interest ahead of both this time.

Obama is setting a rigorous timeline to enact "comprehensive health care reform" by year's end, though he didn't precisely define what that would entail. His advisers say while he hopes for a bipartisan measure, he won't be deterred by ideological fights or interest group opposition.

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GM auditors talking Chapter 11

BY TOM KRISHER
The Associated Press

DETROIT — General Motors Corp.'s auditors have raised "substantial doubt" about the troubled automaker's ability to continue operations, and the company said it may have to seek bankruptcy protection if it can't execute a huge restructuring plan.

The automaker revealed the concerns Thursday in an annual report filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

"The corporation's recurring losses from operations, stockholders' deficit, and inability to generate sufficient cash flow to meet its obligations and sustain its operations raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern," auditors for the accounting firm Deloitte & Touche LLP wrote in the report.

GM has received \$13.4 billion in federal loans as it tries to survive the worst auto sales climate in 27 years. It is seeking a total of \$30 billion from the government. During the past three years it has piled up \$82 billion in losses, including \$30.9 billion in 2008.

The company faces a March 31 deadline to have signed agreements of concessions from debt-holders and the United Auto Workers union to show the government it can become viable



again. On Feb. 17 it submitted the restructuring plan to the Treasury Department that includes laying off 47,000 workers worldwide by the end of the year and closing five more U.S. factories.

GM said in its filing that its future depends on successfully executing the plan.

"If we fail to do so for any reason, we would not be able to continue as a going concern and could potentially be forced to seek relief through a filing under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code," the

Detroit-based automaker said in the annual report.

GM, the report said, is highly dependent on auto sales volume, which dropped rapidly last year. "There is no assurance that the global automobile market will recover or that it will not suffer a significant further downturn," the company wrote.

But Harlan Platt, a professor at Northeastern University in Boston who teaches about corporate turnarounds, said the auditors' concerns don't mean GM is

headed for a bankruptcy filing. The auditors, he said, are merely stating what the world has known for months.

"A company which has borrowed \$13.4 billion and has asked for billions more around the world is obviously in trouble. So this is anticipated," he said.

Platt said the union concessions and debt restructuring laid out in the government loan terms, plus GM's own restructuring steps that include shedding unprofitable brands, will make the company healthy again once auto sales recover from current low levels.

"I think the government has forced the hands of everybody," Platt said.

U.S. auto sales in February dropped to the lowest level since December 1981. Last year, automakers sold 13.2 million vehicles in the U.S., about 3 million less than the 16.1 million sold in 2007. Analysts and auto company executives are predicting sales of just over 10 million this year.

GM has said it wants to avoid bankruptcy protection because it would scare off customers. Car buyers, the company has said, would be reluctant to buy from an automaker in Chapter 11 due to fears that it wouldn't be around long enough to honor warranties or make replacement parts.



Ford offers to cut debt with cash

The Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ford Motor Co. took another step Wednesday to stay cost-competitive with government-financed automakers General Motors and Chrysler when it offered to exchange up to 40 percent of its debt for cash and stock.

The company and its financial arm are putting up \$2.2 billion in cash to entice holders of \$10.4 billion in convertible notes, other unsecured debt and secured term debt to take the offer. The company said reducing the debt will cut the amount it pays in interest and put it in better position to compete with General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC.

"This is all part of a restructuring plan to make the company healthier in the end," said Ford spokesman Mark Truby.

Ford said Wednesday that it still does not intend to seek federal aid.

Bush aides to testify on prosecutor firings

WASHINGTON — Top aides during the presidency of George W. Bush have agreed to testify before Congress under oath about the firing of federal prosecutors.

Karl Rove and Harriet Miers are to testify before the House Judiciary Committee in transcribed depositions. The committee says it also might call the two for public testimony.

The agreement reached Wednesday ends a lawsuit over whether former White House aides could be forced to testify about matters on which they advised the president.

Bush had ordered the aides not to testify on the matter.

Obama picks Florida's Fugate to head FEMA

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Wednesday tapped Florida emergency manager Craig Fugate to head the Federal Emergency Management Agency, turning to a Republican appointed who has steered the state through numerous hurricanes since 2001.

In a statement issued by the White House, Obama said he plans to nominate Fugate who will help the administration "improve our preparedness, response and recovery efforts."

Obama said Fugate will travel with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano to the Gulf Coast on Thursday to meet with local officials still struggling to recover from 2005 hurricanes.

Barbara Bush doing well after heart surgery

HOUSTON — Former first lady Barbara Bush was in good condition and resting comfortably Thursday following 2½-hour heart surgery to replace her aortic valve, a hospital official said.

Bush, 83, was being monitored in the intensive care unit at The Methodist Hospital, hospital spokeswoman Gale Smith said.

Family spokesman Jim McGrath said Bush was up and talking Wednesday night in intensive care hours after the surgery earlier in the day. He said Thursday: "Everything's status quo. She continues to recover, and everybody's pleased with her progress."

The surgery was set last week after Bush experienced a shortness of breath, McGrath said.

He said doctors determined the aortic valve had started to harden.

Dr. Gerald Lawrie, the heart surgeon at the Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center who performed the surgery, said the operation went "extremely well."

"I expect her to recover fully," Lawrie said.

From The Associated Press



Bush



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Court urged to drop enemy combatant case

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration on Wednesday renewed its request that the Supreme Court drop the case of a suspected al-Qaida sleeper agent and not rule on whether a president can indefinitely detain terrorist suspects in the United States.

In papers filed to the court, government lawyers say the case of Ali al-Marri should be dismissed because he has now been charged in civilian criminal court.

Acting Solicitor General Edwin Kneedler said for the justices to make a finding in the case would "render a hypothetical pronouncement that would not affect the legal rights of [al-Marri] or any other person."

Al-Marri's claim is "entirely abstract" now that he faces trial, Kneedler wrote.

The Obama administration last week sought to dismiss al-Marri's case before the Supreme Court, shortly after prosecutors unsealed a criminal indictment against him.

A legal U.S. resident studying at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., when he was arrested in late 2001, al-Marri has been held for more than five years in a military brig in Charleston, S.C., after President George W. Bush declared him an enemy combatant. His lawyers have challenged the president's authority to detain — without charge — people legally in the United States.

The Obama administration has asked the justices to render that challenge moot and leave the issue unresolved because al-Marri is headed to a civilian courtroom.

Al-Marri's lawyers filed papers to the Supreme Court late Tuesday asking the justices to keep the case alive because the government "has not renounced the legal authority under which al-Marri was designated and detained as an 'enemy combatant' and has made no commitment that al-Marri will not be re-designated and re-detained as an 'enemy combatant' in the future."

Break in cold case came after new team took over

By NAFEESA SYEED
AND BRIAN WESTLEY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It took a new police chief, a fresh team of investigators and the unyielding persistence of Chandra Levy's parents to finally get an arrest warrant in one of the nation's most famous cold cases.

A Salvadoran illegal immigrant in prison for two other attacks in the same park where authorities say the young federal intern was sexually assaulted and killed will face a first-degree murder charge. But it took eight years to overcome a bungled police investigation that focused on then-Congressman Gary Condit, who had been romantically linked to Levy.

"It's really never too late," said Cathy Lanier, chief of District of Columbia police. "I think the combination of a fresh set of eyes and passage of time is sometimes what's needed in cold cases."

Lanier, a nearly 20-year veteran of the D.C. force, had an interest in lingering unsolved crimes. Among her first initiatives when she took over as chief in January 2007 was to revisit some of the thousands of cold cases. She assigned three new detectives to the Levy case and they were joined by three federal prosecutors.

The team interviewed at least a dozen witnesses and picked up a trail that led them back to Ingmar Guandique, who had been questioned but not seriously considered as a suspect until recently.

Key to breaking the case appeared to be interviews — detailed in an affidavit supporting the arrest warrant — with at least two witnesses who claimed Guandique told them he killed Levy. U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Taylor said there was no physical evidence linking Guandique to the crime, but that the "cumulative weight" of circumstantial evidence gathered led investigators to the conclusion that Guandique was the killer.

The six-member team has already had success. Last year, the team solved the 1996 D.C. slaying of 23-year-old Shaquita Bell, a northern Virginia resident whose body has never been found. Bell's ex-boyfriend, a convicted felon, pleaded guilty in October to killing her.

But police weren't the only ones to investigate. Since Levy went missing nearly eight years ago, the Levy family hired its own investigators, college students studied the case and The Washington Post wrote a 12-part series that ultimately fingered Guandique as the prime suspect.



GINA FERAZZI/Los Angeles Times

Jack Reavley, left, 85, and Bob Clauch, 83, have been together for more than 50 years and have changed their minds about same-sex marriage. If the California Supreme Court overturns a ban on same-sex unions, the two expect to finally tie the knot.

2 veterans, together since '51, considering getting married

By JOANNA LIN
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — The year was 1951. The U.S. military had just declared homosexuality an "unacceptable risk" and dishonorably discharged about 2,000 men and women from the armed services.

It was the same year Army Sgt. Bob Clauch and his commanding officer, Lt. Jack Reavley, fell in love. More than half a century later, they are still together.

For most of their lives, marriage was not an option for gays. But when same-sex marriage became legal in California last year, more than 18,000 couples tied the knot. Clauch and Reavley, longtime Los Angeles residents, were not among them.

"I know that we've been together a long time," Clauch said, "but the idea of cementing this relationship seems unnecessary."

"What's the point?" Reavley added.

After all, Clauch, 83, and Reavley, 85, said they didn't know if they would live much longer.

But, then, perhaps that is exactly why marriage matters: As the couple enter the twilight years, what will happen to one when the other dies?

Friends have passed, families are distant. Although they are registered domestic partners in California, federal marriage benefits — including Social Security and survivor payments — are out of reach.

So Clauch and Reavley have been reconsidering. If the opportunity to marry came again, they said they probably would take advantage.

Thursday afternoon, the California Supreme Court was planning to consider the constitutionality of Proposition 8, the ban on same-sex marriage that the state's voters passed in November. The court's ruling, expected within 90 days, could overturn the ban.

Clauch and Reavley are quiet about their feelings toward marriage. In recent months, as protests mounted against Proposition 8, they sensed that people were disappointed that they weren't vocal marriage advocates.

To some degree, the couple said, their reticence stems from the environment in which they first fell in love.

Reavley, who was drafted in World War II and remained in the Army Reserve, was called back to service during the Korean War. He became Clauch's commanding officer at Armed Forces Radio in Munich, Germany.

"It was love at first sight, Clauch said.

But being together was difficult. They couldn't

be seen alone together without raising suspicion or risking the scrutiny of military police. Reavley had a wife and two young daughters. Both men felt weighed down with guilt.

Troops in the unit began to notice their relationship; rumors swirled. If discovered, they could have been court-martialed. After a year of hiding, they confronted their unit.

Reavley called a meeting. He had his secretary, a lesbian who had helped conceal the couple's romance, pretend to phone headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

"I said, if anybody has anything to say about Sergeant Clauch and Lieutenant Reavley's association ... now's your chance," Reavley said.

No one said a word.

"We didn't admit guilt, and we didn't say we weren't gay, Reavley said. "So, case closed. And the rumors stopped."

Within months, Clauch and Reavley returned to the United States with honorable discharges.

Instead of returning to his wife and children in Texas, Reavley joined Clauch in Los Angeles. There, they told Clauch's mother and sister that they were going to be together. Clauch's family did not approve.

It was harder for Reavley's family.

Reavley returned to Texas while Clauch waited for him in New Orleans.

"Morally, it wasn't the right thing for me to do, to leave her," said Reavley, who chokes up when talking about his wife and family. "She was such a sweet girl — I hated to hurt her."

After several months, Reavley wrote a letter to his wife when she was out of town. By the time she came home, he was gone.

"That was the only way to do it," he said. "A clean break and for me to get the heck out of there, and out of the way so she could go on with her life."

Clauch and Reavley share a two-bedroom apartment at a complex in Hollywood of mostly low-income seniors.

The only reason to marry at their age, the couple say, is to receive marriage benefits. Given another chance to say "I do," they say they probably would, but history makes them hesitant.

"I suppose it's because for so many, many, many years and centuries, men have not married men, and women have not married women," Clauch said. "We've been brought up not having anything like that, not wanting anything like that. ... We've always been given the impression that it was a horrible kind of situation, and it is not easy to cross over that line."



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IN THE WORLD

Sudan president mocks war crimes charges and orders aid workers out

BY SARAH EL DEEB
The Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Sudan's president, wanted by an international court on war crimes charges, denounced the tribunal, the U.N. and aid agencies on Thursday as part of a new "colonialism" that aims to destabilize his country.

President Omar al-Bashir danced and waved a cane defiantly before thousands of supporters, as the arrest warrant had its first repercussions on the ground. Sudan ordered at least 11 aid agencies to leave Darfur and cease operations in retaliation for the International Criminal Court's decision to issue an arrest warrant. The groups started the process of moving out Thursday.

Aid workers warned that the

expulsion order could spark a humanitarian crisis for up to 2 million people in Darfur who are directly served by the agencies, receiving food, shelter and medical supplies.

In Zamzam Camp, one of the largest Darfur refugee camps, residents said aid workers who operate daily in the camps did not show up on Thursday. Refugees said they were now feared what will happen when their most recent monthly delivery of food and other supplies run out if aid workers don't return. Particularly worrisome is the pullout of health workers, and the possibility of disease outbreaks in the upcoming rainy season.

"After God, we only have the organizations" to help us, said Zamzam camp resident Ibrahim Safi, 34.



NASSER NASSER/AP

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir waves his cane in front of thousands of supporters at the entrance of the presidential palace in Khartoum, Sudan, on Thursday.

NATO to restore normal relations with Moscow

Clinton: Time to 'explore a fresh start' with Russia

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — NATO found agreement after intense internal debate Thursday to restore normal relations with Russia seven months after it froze ties in response to Moscow's invasion of Georgia.

"Russia is an important player, a global player, and that means that not talking to them is not an option," NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told a news conference, at which he announced the decision made by NATO foreign ministers.

It was a step forward for the Obama administration, which is seeking to establish a broad, positive relationship with Russia after years of tensions. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her NATO debut, argued in favor of restoring relations by reviving the NATO-Russia Council, a forum created in 2002 to strengthen ties with Moscow, which is not a NATO member.

In her remarks to the NATO meeting, Clinton said the time had come "to explore a fresh start" with Moscow, according to a text released by her staff.

"We can and must find ways to work constructively with Russia where we share areas of common interest, including helping the people of Afghanistan, arms control and nonproliferation, counter-piracy and counter-narcotics and addressing the threats posed by Iran and North Korea," she said in prepared remarks.

"We think that this is a step in the right direction. At last common sense has triumphed," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Igor Lyakin-Frolov was quoted as saying in Moscow by Interfax, the Russian news agency.

De Hoop Scheffer said there was a NATO consensus that Russia must deal forthrightly with issues of concern to alliance members.

He said NATO continued to



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton attends Thursday's meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels. NATO found agreement after intense internal debate Thursday to restore normal relations with Russia seven months after it froze ties in response to Moscow's invasion of Georgia.

GEERT VANDEN WINGAERT/AP

International meeting on Afghanistan sought

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton proposed on Thursday a high-level international conference on Afghanistan to be sponsored by the United Nations and attended by a wide range of countries including Pakistan and possibly Iran.

Clinton presented the proposal at a NATO foreign ministers meeting where she said the session could be held March 31 and led by the U.N.'s special representative for Afghanistan, Kai Eide of Norway, who was appointed to improve coordination of international civilian assistance to Kabul.

"We hope that this meeting could provide an opportunity to reach a common set of principles, perhaps embodied in a chairman's statement, on a common way forward," she said, according to a prepared text released by her staff.

Without citing others by name, Clinton also proposed having in attendance "key regional and strategic countries," which appeared to mean Russia, India and possibly others, plus "major financial contributors and relevant international organizations."

From The Associated Press

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STARS AND STRIPES



ERIC GAY/AP

Workers Bradley Hever, left, and Raul Martinez-Mark outfit a vehicle with armor at the Texas Armoring Corp. in San Antonio. Due to high drug-cartel violence in northern Mexico, American companies are seeing an increase in requests for cars with armor plating.

Armor-plated cars in demand along border

BY MICHELLE ROBERTS

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The drug violence in Mexico has gotten so bad that booming numbers of Mexican and American professionals are having their cars fitted with armor plates, bulletproof glass and James Bond-style gadgets such as electrified door handles and push-button smokescreens.

Until recently, it was mostly movie stars, business moguls and politicians who took such precautions. But now, industry officials say, the customers include factory owners, doctors, newspaper publishers and others who have business on both sides of the border and fear killings, kidnappings and car

jacking by drug dealers or people in their debt.

The customers "don't have to be very big," said Mark Burton, chief executive of International Armoring Corp. of Ogden, Utah. "This becomes almost a necessity."

One San Antonio company said it expects a 50 percent increase in business this year.

The modifications cost \$80,000 to \$100,000, and they are being done not just on limousines, but on Toyotas, Hondas, pickup trucks and SUVs.

"I feel we need to be in a cocoon that is impenetrable," said a businessman who runs factories in Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and has gotten two Chevrolet Suburbans armored since October 2007.

In recent weeks, the city's police chief was driven from office by powerful drug traffickers who began slaying cops to underline their threat.

Los Angeles Times

MEXICO CITY — A fierce battle between rival drug gangs at a prison in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez on Wednesday left at least 20 inmates dead and three critically wounded, authorities said.

It took guards, police and military reinforcements nearly three hours to contain the unrest. Black smoke drifted from the cinder-block prison and helicopters patrolled overhead as anxious families waited outside for news.

Most of the victims had been beaten or stabbed to death.

The violence comes as the ravaged city is being placed under military control.

Ciudad Juarez, just across the border from El Paso, Texas, has been the epicenter of Mexico's raging drug war. More people have been killed there than anywhere else — 1,600 last year and 250 last month.

The state governor was am-

bushed; he survived but a bodyguard was killed.

President Felipe Calderon ordered the deployment of an additional 5,000 troops and federal police in Ciudad Juarez to attempt to restore law and order. The increase will nearly triple the number of troops and federal police officers operating there.

On Tuesday, city officials announced the military also will take command of the local, corruption-ridden police force as well as transportation and city prisons.

Wednesday's prison uprising took place at a state facility that was not slated to go under military authority.

Warden Cesar Martinez Acosta said that the fighting did not target guards or security forces, and was not part of a breakout attempt.

He denied reports that two federal agents were among the dead.

The brawl, which erupted around 6 a.m. at the end of overnight conjugal visits, pitted the Aztecas gang against the Mexicles. Also fighting was the Mexicles' ally, Artistas Asesinos (Murdering Artists).

Security in Pakistan questioned after attack

The Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan — An opposition leader declared Thursday that the bloody ambush of the Sri Lankan cricket team shows security in Pakistan has "collapsed," while a government official said authorities had identified the attackers.

The country's cricket chief, meanwhile, dismissed as "totally fabricated" claims by British referee Chris Broad that police abandoned him and other officials during Tuesday's attack.

Six police officers and a driver were killed and seven players, an umpire and an assistant coach were hurt in the ambush in Lahore, which occurred despite government pledges to give the convoy the same level of protection afforded a head of state in the country wracked by a virulent militancy.

"The security system in Paki-

stan under this regime has collapsed because this government is too busy doing other things, they are too busy in their quest for power," Mushahid Hussain, an opposition leader told a televised media conference.

"They should be held responsible."

Days before the attack, Pakistan's government dismissed the opposition-led regional administration based in Lahore as part of a bitter political dispute. Several people have alleged that chaos resulting from that decision could have been a factor in the security lapses.

Lahore commissioner Khusro Pervez said the gunmen should have been battled by "back-up police support which didn't arrive."

"The vehicles used for escorting the Sri Lankan convoy were not adequate," the Dawn news-



Protesters in Mumbai, India, chant slogans Wednesday condemning the recent attack on Sri Lankan cricket players in Pakistan. The attack came at a time of mounting political turmoil.

paper quoted him as saying to a television news show owned by the same media company.

"There are certain security lapses, which are very vivid and

very clear," he said.

None of the attackers is believed to be in custody, though on Thursday, authorities said they knew the identity of the assailants.

Video captures Turkish man surviving train-truck collision

The Associated Press

ISTANBUL — A Turkish man says life is "beautiful" after he survived a collision between a truck and a train that was captured on security camera video.

The video, released Wednesday by Dogan news agency, shows a train ramming into a

flatbed truck as it crosses train tracks in the Mediterranean port city of Mersin on Feb. 25. Propelled sideways, the truck sweeps over 32-year-old Cem Tokac, who was standing beside the tracks.

The footage shows Tokac after the accident, lying motionless on the ground. Remarkably, Tokac — as well as the truck driver — suf-

fered only minor injuries.

"I can't remember anything about the accident," Tokac said. "I thought I was asleep. But when I woke up, I was not in my bed. I was on the ground."

Tokac, who plans to marry in April, said Feb. 25 is his new birthday.

"Life is really beautiful," he said.

Beheader deemed not criminally responsible

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — A Canadian judge ruled Thursday that a man accused of beheading and cannibalizing a fellow Greyhound bus passenger is not criminally responsible due to mental illness.

The decision means Chinese immigrant Vince Li will be treated in a mental institution instead of going to prison.

The victim's family dismissed the trial as a "rubber stamp" that allows Li to get away with murder. The judge said Li should not be held criminally accountable for stabbing Tim McLean dozens of times last July and dismembering his body while horrified passengers fled.

That Li killed McLean was never in question at the trial. Li has admitted to the killing but pleaded not guilty.

Official: Russia working on anti-satellite weapons

MOSCOW — Russia is working to develop anti-satellite weapons to match efforts by other nations, a deputy defense minister was quoted as saying Thursday. Gen. Valentin Popovkin said Russia continues to oppose a space arms race but will respond to moves made by other countries, according to Russian news reports.

"We can't sit back and quietly watch others doing that; such work is being conducted in Russia," Popovkin was quoted as saying.

From The Associated Press

FACES

Charges dropped against Lil Wayne

A judge in Atlanta has dismissed felony drug charges against rapper Lil Wayne. The Grammy-award winning rapper, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter Jr., was arrested in August 2006 at a hotel. Atlanta police said they found unmarked bottles containing hydrocodone and a generic form of Xanax, along with a small amount of marijuana.

On Tuesday, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Michael Johnson granted the rapper's request to suppress on the basis of an illegal search. Carter's attorney, William Head, said his client wasn't staying in the room where the arrest was made. Carter currently faces drug charges in Arizona, stemming from a January 2008 arrest, and a weapons charge from 2007 in New York.

— The Associated Press

Nathan Fillion: 'I'm the next Angela Lansbury'

Move over, Angela Lansbury, there's a new mystery writer/turned-detective in Tinseltown.

Actor Nathan Fillion — known for his roles on "Desperate Housewives" and "Waitress" — plays the lead in "Castle," a new TV drama about a famous mystery novelist who helps NYPD detectives find a copycat killer who's been committing murders based on his books.

Fillion admits that the role makes him feel like a modern-day Angela Lansbury from "Murder, She Wrote" — with one tiny difference.

He laughs, "If Angela Lansbury was more manly — but just a little!"

Fillion has faith that his sci-fi fan following — which he's garnered from appearing on shows such as "Firefly" — will support him wholeheartedly in his latest project.

On the Net: abc.go.com

— Wireless Flash

Banks: Scars, attitude part of Top Model beauty

Tyra Banks, with a lively rush of words, describes a photo session fea-



Lil Wayne won't be facing drug charges in Georgia.



Nathan Fillion says he's the new Angela Lansbury.



Tyra Banks is looking again for a few faces.

tured in the season debut of "America's Next Top Model."

In the shoot dubbed "Return to Innocence," the CW reality series' aspiring models are depicted playing "games that young girls played back in the day — dodgeball, jacks, double-Dutch jump-rope," Banks said. But the 13 women are posed to look anything but pure.

"There's a girl smoking. A girl from the wrong side of good," Banks said. It's part of the TV producer and talk-show host's campaign against what she considers pop culture's harmful messages for girls.

Banks said she created "America's Next Top Model," to counter stereotypes of who and what is considered beautiful. The show has included minorities and women dubbed "plus-size" by the fashion industry.

Banks, who also leads the show's judging panel, challenged convention herself as one of the few African-American supermodels.

This time around on "Top Model," one contestant bears scars on her body from an accidental scalding she suffered as a child and refuses to hide the marks. Another has startlingly large, mesmerizing eyes. A third is a street preacher.

"This is a very special group of girls," Banks said. "I want them to connect with viewers, and not just with their looks, but with their personalities."

Banks is ready to push industry boundaries on the show's next sea-

son, due in September. Women on the comparatively short side will be the focus: Nobody over 5-foot-7 need apply for the shot at a modeling contract. Open tryouts are ahead this month in cities including New York, Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles.

On the Net: www.cwtv.com/shows/americas-next-top-model12

— The Associated Press

Disney Channel enrolls 'High School Musical 4'

The Disney Channel is going back to school with "High School Musical 4."

The fourth iteration of the popular musical franchise will begin production later this year and premiere in 2010.

The Disney Channel said in a statement Tuesday that the new movie will introduce a new cast of characters and will focus on a cross-town school rivalry.

"High School Musical" drew an audience of 7.7 million when it debuted in 2006. "High School Musical 2" more than doubled viewership of the original with 17.2 million in 2007. "High School Musical 3" was released in theaters in 2008 and made more than \$40 million its opening weekend.

On the Net: tv.disney.go.com/disneychannel/originalmovies/highschoolmusic4

— The Associated Press

Quick hits from Wireless Flash

Fall Out Boy rocker Pete Wentz is afraid of being murdered. The musician — who suffers from severe paranoia — won't open his door to strangers because he's "convinced" he'll be murdered. Instead, Wentz plays it safe and ignores the knocks.

"I used to think that someday I'd end up murdering a close friend or relative," he said. "Now it's reversed and I'm convinced it's going to happen to me. That's the way I'm going out, I'm completely sure of it. So I refuse to answer the front door — it greatly minimizes that risk."



What's a little blood?

Actress Stana Katic gets beaten up on her new show, but a little blood never hurt her. Katic — who recently appeared in flicks "The Spirit" and "Quantum Of Solace" — plays a smart, strong-willed detective in ABC's new drama, "Castle." Her role requires stunt work, and Katic is determined to do all the on-screen action herself — even if it hurts. Recently, she fell while "running after a perp," which left her with a big scab on her knee.

"I had to 'Matrix' it over this big box in the middle of a rooftop," she said. "I fell as I landed, but it's OK, I was on a mission!"

Katic said she can handle the pain that comes with "Castle" because she grew up with four older brothers who played pretty rough.



As "ER" nears its end, Angela Bassett is already plotting her next move. The actress' next gig will be behind the camera, as she makes her directorial debut with an indie feature titled "United States." Bassett's dramatic flick is about a black literary figure who writes a fake autobiography from the perspective of a barely literate hoodlum.



Stana Katic has been getting wounded in the line of acting duty. The actress portrays NYPD detective Kate Beckett in the ABC series "Castle."

Upcoming: Movie Musicals

Oscar host Hugh Jackman declared the movie musical is back. Is this the proof?

"Fame"

What: The stories of some artsy kids over their four years at the prestigious New York High School of Performing Arts. Playing their teachers: Debbie Allen, Charles S. Dutton, Kelsey Grammer, Megan Mullally and Bebe Neuwirth.

Directed by: Choreographer Kevin Tancharoen

Based on: The 1980 film, which spawned a TV series and a stage musical in London.

Opening: Sept. 25

"Nine"

What: A famous film director (Daniel Day-Lewis) suffers a midlife crisis while balancing the many women in his life: his wife (Marion Cotillard), mistress (Penelope Cruz), protege (Nicole Kidman, left), friend and costume designer (Judi Dench), fashion journalist (Kate Hudson), prostitute from his youth (Stacy "Fergie" Ferguson) and mother (Sophia Loren).

Directed by: Rob Marshall ("Chicago")

Based on: The 1982 Broadway musical, which was based on Federico Fellini's autobiographical 1963 film, "8 1/2."

Opening: Nov. 25

"The Princess and the Frog"

What: The animated musical tale of 19-year-old Tiana, Disney's first African-American princess, voiced by Anika Noni Rose of "Dreamgirls." Tiana lives in New Orleans' French Quarter during the Jazz Age and happens upon a prince who was transformed into a frog by an evil voodoo magician (Keith David). Oprah Winfrey and Terrence Howard voice her mother and father.

Directed by: Ron Clements and John Musker ("The Little Mermaid," "Aladdin" and "Hercules")

Based on: E.D. Baker's The Frog Princess, a twist on the old fairy tale.

Opening: Dec. 25

"Footloose"

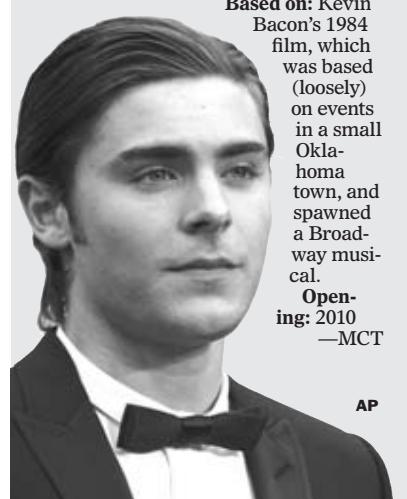
What: Zac Efron (below) plays Ren, a rebellious teen who moves to a town where dancing is not allowed (!).

Directed by: Kenny Ortega (all three "High School Musicals")

Based on: Kevin Bacon's 1984 film, which was based (loosely) on events in a small Oklahoma town, and spawned a Broadway musical.

Opening: 2010

— MCT



FAITH



Photo courtesy of Inpop Records

Julian Drive is, from left, James Nitz, Jesse Triplett, Shane Bowers and Shaun Bennett. The band's new album is titled "My Coming Day."

Julian Drive delivers reflective Southern rock

BY BRIAN BOWERS
Stars and Stripes

Even in bad times, real life has a way of spawning good music.

It's certainly the case for songwriter Shane Bowers of Julian Drive, a Georgia-based band that drives home a message of hope with a Southern-rock edge.

The band's major-label debut — "My Coming Day" — is filled with songs that describe heartache, healing and devotion. Several of the tracks are very personal.

Bowers' parents divorced when he was 4.

"I made a pact early on ... saying I'm never going to go through

Today's Praise

that myself," he said.

But things didn't work out according to plan.

When Bowers edged toward marriage in his mid-20s, he saw some warning signs that things weren't going to work out well — "I think we both knew, but we got married anyway."

As time progressed, the relationship became so strained that the couple just gave up the fight.

And that led to a lot of guilt.

"Being involved with the youth ministry at church, that just made me beat myself up even more," Bowers said. "I couldn't forgive myself."

However, spending time reading, reflecting and praying helped him appreciate God's forgiveness.

"I finally got to the point where I said, 'Christ can forgive me; why can't I forgive myself?'"

He then asked God to take the mistake and use it to help others.

"He'll use us in spite of us," Bowers said. "He'll use us through our storms."

In this case, the experience provided the basis for "Cry." The song describes finding hope amid sadness with lyrics like: "I'm on my way to a better day. ... when I think I'm alone you're by my side."

And, indeed, the song has en-

couraged others.

"As soon as this record was put together, I started getting e-mails and calls," Bowers said. "Certainly, divorce is not something I'm proud of ... but there's forgiveness. God's forgiven me — and, not only that, he's given me a wife and kids."

"My Coming Day" contains other personal reflections. "One Step Away" emerged from daily devotions during a difficult time in Bowers' life. The comforting ballad describes the nearness of God during troubled times.

"I was reading in my devotion books one day, and something in that book just jumped out at me ... that song came quicker than a

lot of them. It sort of wrote itself," Bowers said.

The album opens with the melodic "From Your Hands," which describes Jesus' love and sacrifice. The energetic "Unplug" describes "distractions all around me" that can block out God.

The title track also grew out of daily devotions and continues the theme of hope.

"No matter how dark those days get, as long as you know Christ, there's always going to be a better day coming," Bowers said.

Today's Praise is a roundup of news and reviews from the contemporary Christian music industry. And for the record, Shane is not related to Brian Bowers.

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Perspectives

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YOUR MONEY

Reserve leaders seek better retirement plan

Reserve and National Guard members deserve a better retirement plan, one that pays an annuity earlier than age 60 at least for those willing to serve longer than 20 years, Reserve leaders have told Congress.

Reservists might deserve extended health care coverage, too, also in recognition of their full operational role in Iraq, Afghanistan and future wars, said some Reserve component commanders who testified Tuesday before the House Armed Services subcommittee on Military Personnel.

"My soldiers ... are proud of what they're doing," said Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of Army Reserve. "But they say 'What are you doing for me? Are you going to do anything about the retirement age? Are you going to do anything about medical care? Because you're asking more of me but I don't see, in return, you

giving back as much.' That's what I'm focused on."

Current Reserve retirement offers little or no incentive for members to serve past 20 years, Stultz said, because longer service doesn't change the age 60 start of annuities. So it's hard to persuade members or spouses that another hitch is worth the risk of returning to war or being separated, Stultz explained. He cited a recent conversation with a Guardsman whose skill, truck driver, is dangerous and in demand among units deploying for war.

"He said, 'Sir, I've got 22 years in and there is no incentive for me to stay. ... I've got to go home and face my wife. If I tell her I'm re-enlisting, she's going to ask 'What are they going to give you?' I'll say, 'Nothing.' She's going to say, 'Then you're [just] volunteering to go back.'

"There's got to be ... a reason to stay. Once you've earned eligibil-

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

ity for retirement because we're going to give you something. I think lowering the retirement age for staying beyond 20 [is] that incentive."

A law passed in early 2008 does allow earlier retirement than age 60 for Reserve and Guard members with 20 or more years if they deploy for war or national emergency. For every 90 consecutive days they spend mobilized, reservists will see the start date for annuities cut by three months. But Congress made the change effective only for deployment time after Jan. 28, 2008, leaving out many thousands deployed

since 9/11.

Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., ranking Republican on the personnel subcommittee, a retired Army Reserve officer and father of four children now serving on active duty or in the Reserves, has reintroduced a bill to extend last year's Reserve retirement change retroactively to cover mobilizations since 9/11. Another Wilson bill would allow Guard and Reserve members who earn early retirement to receive full Tricare benefits between the time annuities start and 60.

It was Wilson and Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif., chairwoman of the subcommittee, who urged Reserve commanders to share their views on enhancing Reserve retirement or health care. The comments were surprising frank given that the Department of Defense had expressed long standing opposition to modifying Reserve retirement.

The argument made often during the Bush administration was that there are more efficient ways to retain careerists than by enriching the retirement plan. Retirement reform bills of recent years have varied in design and costs. One simply would lower the



Wilson

annuity start to age 55. Another would begin annuities one year earlier than age 60 for every two years of service beyond 20 years. Stultz supported the latter.

With a plan like that, he said, spouses of reservists and Guardsmen could reason that "we are going to be able to do things earlier in life than what we planned because you're staying. You're staying at a risk of another deployment but there's a reason."

Other Reserve component chiefs at the hearing agreed that either retirement or health care coverage should be enhanced to recognize that Reserve and Guard members aren't the "weekend warriors" of yesteryear.

The retirement piece is a very big incentive ... not only for those we are bringing on but for those who are currently in," said Lt. Gen. Charles E.

Stenner Jr., chief of Air Force Reserve. "We are looking at alternatives that will allow them to bridge that time from [when] they have to leave the service until they have to feed the family with that retirement check."

To comment, e-mail milupdate@aol.com, write to Military Update, P.O. Box 23111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit: militaryupdate.com

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES

52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD Chg	52-wk % Chg
13,136.69	6,705.63	Dow Jones Industrials	6,875.84	+149.82	+2.23	+21.66	-43.89
5,536.72	2,289.27	Dow Jones Transportation	2,405.72	+110.73	+4.82	+31.99	-48.42
530.57	294.30	Dow Jones Utilities	307.35	+44.78	+1.58	+17.10	-37.48
9,687.24	4,297.39	NYSE Composite	4,464.89	+130.19	+3.00	+22.44	-50.18
2,433.31	1,130.47	Amex Index	1,280.87	+31.56	+2.53	+8.35	-44.73
2,551.47	1,295.48	Nasdaq Composite	1,353.74	+32.73	+2.48	+14.16	-40.44
1,440.24	692.30	S&P 500	712.87	+16.54	+2.38	+21.08	-46.55
897.37	406.45	S&P MidCap	432.02	+12.76	+3.04	+19.74	-45.31
764.38	360.62	Russell 2000	371.30	+10.29	+2.85	+25.66	-45.70
14,564.81	7,020.02	DI Wilshire 5000	7,235.62	+171.93	+2.43	+20.38	-46.30

NYSE

AMEX

NASDAQ

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)			
Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
GenElec	7,449,614	6.69	-.32	PSCrudeDL	35,778	2.38	+.26	PwSln QQQ	151,600	27.33	+.71
Citigrp	43,511,414	7.13	-.09	BarcSO	42,772	17.85	+.14	Intel	82,228	12.76	+.48
SPDR	42,043,64	71.73	+.16	ElctrcGld	24,344	8.15	+.02	Oracle	70,560	14.96	-.05
Bkfst	25,150.40	3.93	-.01	GoldGld	24,044	11.18	+.04	HPQ	68,02	15.25	+.86
WellsFargo	2,431,59	9.66	-.10	GoldGld	20,165	1.33	+.06	Microsoft	65,783	16.12	+.24
DirxFinBull	22,767,07	3.72	-.10	NvGld	18,444	1.54	-.25	Dell Inc	38,960	8.88	-.27
SPDR FcnL	22,765,03	6.89	-.09	NovaGld	12,774	2.58	-.02	DryShips	30,946	3.90	+.11
JPMorgan	14,305,07	19.30	-.17	FCFcd	12,028	11.20	-.11	Comcast	28,210	12.74	+.24
ProlutFin	13,135,29	1.83	-.04	GranTrgn	11,379	2.37	+.22	FirstFlrd	20,836	1.72	+.05
ProUTSP	12,967,80	16.19	+.76	AbdAsPac	11,131	4.08	+.28	Nvidia	27,646	8.46	+.58

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg	% Chg	YTD Chg
Alliant Techsystem	9	67.53	6.31	-.03	-.05	-26.3
Boeing	1.68	8	30.31	+.95	+.29	-29.0
Computer Sciences	6	36.23	+2.07	+.31	+.83	-25.0
General Dynamics	1.52	7	40.22	+.39	+.30	-30.2
General Electric	.40	4	6.69	-.32	-.48	-58.7
Halliburton	.80	15	34.03	+.86	+.66	-10.1
Harris Corp.	1.21	7	25.36	+.66	+.22	-28.8
L-3 Communications	1.19	9	61.95	+.63	+.07	-26.3
Lockheed Martin	1.28	8	36.33	+1.10	+.31	-19.3
Northrop G	1.60	7	40.22	+.39	+.30	-30.2
Raytheon	1.12	9	37.40	+.95	+.26	-26.7
Rockwell Int'l.	1.16	5	19.72	+.99	+.38	-38.8
Texas Instruments	.44	10	14.85	+.65	+.43	-4.3
Textron Inc.	.08	2	4.71	+.40	+.66	-66.0
United Technologies	1.54	8	39.16	+.61	+.16	-26.9

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

Name	NAV	Chg	% Ret.
Fidelity Invest: GrdCp	41.70	+.07	-14.8
Fidelity Spartan Inv: Mdknv	44.72	-.17	-22.5
Fidelity Invest: USBI	10.66	-.01	-4
Fidelity Invest: GrdCp	10.01	-.05	-24.0
Fidelity Invest: AMGr50	9.80	-.03	-9.6
Fidelity Invest: Ovrsle	19.03	-.14	-24.1
Amer Century Inv: Ultra	12.15	...	-15.9
Putnam Fund A: GrdHn p	7.03	-.06	-25.1
AIM Investments A: ChartA p	9.47	-.05	-18.4
AIM Investments A: ChartB p	14.13	-.05	-16.1
Frank-Temp Fnk & SMCpGp	17.11	-.05	-17.7
DWS Invest: S: GrndCp	8.80	-.03	-19.8
Fidelity Advisor T: Eqtln	12.34	-.12	-27.2
Fidelity Advisor T: GrdPpt	16.40	+.06	-13.9
DWS Invest S: Ind Fds	25.27	-.16	-24.2
Putnam Fund A: GbEqty p	4.85	-.04	-23.9
Lord Abbott A: DevGta p	8.95	-.05	-15.6
Fidelity Advisor T: OvrsleA	10.10	-.07	-24.1
DWS Invest S: CorpHsic	9.50	-.01	-1.5

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc close

Gold \$906.00

Silver \$12,900

Prime rate 3.25

Discount rate 0.50

Federal funds market rate 0.00-0.25

3-month bill 0.25

30-year bond 3.67

Sources: Bank of America, The Associated Press

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate 3.25

Discount rate 0.50

Federal funds market rate 0.00-0.25

3-month bill 0.25

30-year bond 3.67

Sources: Bank of America, The Associated Press

GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan/Okinawa Change in price	--	\$1.870 +2.5 cents	--	\$1.900 -4.3 cents
South Korea Change in price	\$2.058 +5.7 cents	--	\$2.308 +6.3 cents	\$2.179 -4.3 cents
Guam Change in price	\$2.109* +2.0 cents	\$2.239 +3.0 cents	\$2.349 +2.0 cents	--

For the week of March 7-13 * Midgrade

since 9/11.

Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., ranking Republican on the personnel subcommittee, a retired Army Reserve officer and father of four children now serving on active duty or in the Reserves, has reintroduced a bill to extend last year's Reserve retirement change retroactively to cover mobilizations since 9/11. Another Wilson bill would allow Guard and Reserve members who earn early retirement to receive full Tricare benefits between the time annuities start and 60.

It was Wilson and Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif., chairwoman of the subcommittee, who urged Reserve commanders to share their views on enhancing Reserve retirement or health care. The comments were surprising frank given that the Department of Defense had expressed long standing opposition to modifying Reserve retirement.

The argument made often during the Bush administration was that there are more efficient ways to retain careerists than by enriching the retirement plan. Retirement reform bills of recent years have varied in design and costs. One simply would lower the

annuity start to age 55. Another would begin annuities one year earlier than age 60 for every two years of service beyond 20 years. Stultz supported the latter.

With a plan like that, he said, spouses of reservists and Guardsmen could reason that "we are going to be able to do things earlier in life than what we planned because you're staying. You're staying at a risk of another deployment but there's a reason."

Other Reserve component chiefs at the hearing agreed that either retirement or health care coverage should be enhanced to recognize that Reserve and Guard members aren't the "weekend warriors" of yesteryear.

The retirement piece is a very big incentive ... not only for those we are bringing on but for those who are currently in," said Lt. Gen. Charles E.

Stenner Jr., chief of Air Force Reserve. "We are looking at alternatives that will allow them to bridge that time from [when] they have to leave the service until they have to feed the family with that retirement check."

To comment, e-mail milupdate@aol.com, write to Military Update, P.O. Box 23111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit: militaryupdate.com

or 30-year term policy will cover the life of a mortgage and be there until kids are out of college.

5. Butt out. Taxes on smokes are going up again, putting the average price of a pack of Marlboro at more than \$5. A pack a day at that price costs \$1,825 a year.

6. Open an IDA. An individual development account is a special savings account that helps low-income workers buy homes, cars or start businesses. The accounts are matched by donated dollars at a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio. More people qualify than one might think. Visit www.idanetwork.org to find out more.

7. Drive a stick. They can run about \$800 less than an automatic and get two to four miles per gallon more.

8. Get a roommate. Your home is typically your biggest monthly expense. Whether you rent or own, cut your cost and make a new friend.

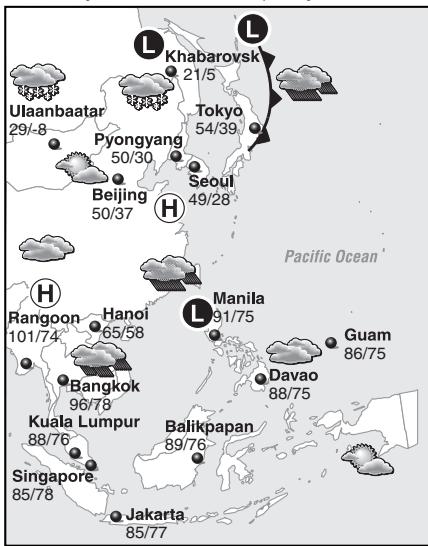
9. Take a staycation. Check for resident discounts on local attractions and explore some great restaurants.

10. Do some sit-ups. Is that New Year's resolution slimming your wallet more than your waist? Consider ditching the pricey gym membership.

TIDE TABLES

Location	Saturday			
	High	Low	High	Low
Japan				
Yokosuka	3:39 a.m.	8:46 a.m.	1:37 p.m.	8:41 p.m.
Sasebo	6:25 a.m.	12:18 p.m.	5:43 p.m.	none
Naha	5:07 a.m.	10:36 a.m.	4:11 p.m.	11:06 p.m.
Hachinohe	10:19 a.m.	7:04 p.m.	none	none
Korea				
Cheju Island/Sogwip'o	8:07 a.m.	1:20 a.m.	8:50 p.m.	3:20 p.m.
Kunsan	12:48 p.m.	6:27 a.m.	none	7:51 p.m.
Guam				
Apra Harbor	5:50 a.m.	10:39 a.m.	3:29 p.m.	11:08 p.m.
Location	Sunday			
	High	Low	High	Low
Japan				
Yokosuka	4:02 a.m.	9:28 a.m.	2:51 p.m.	9:33 p.m.
Sasebo	7:09 a.m.	12:18 a.m.	6:42 p.m.	1:04 p.m.
Naha	5:50 a.m.	11:31 a.m.	5:16 p.m.	11:55 p.m.
Hachinohe	2:55 a.m.	7:19 a.m.	12:31 p.m.	7:56 p.m.
Korea				
Cheju Island/Sogwip'o	9:18 a.m.	3:11 a.m.	9:47 p.m.	4:28 p.m.
Kunsan	1:09 a.m.	7:53 a.m.	2:01 p.m.	8:53 p.m.
Guam				
Apra Harbor	6:29 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	4:49 p.m.	none

For tides at other sites apply minutes to Naha tides:
Sukku, Ora Wan: -39, Sesoko Byochi: +11 high and low tide;
Unten Ko: -7 high, -8 low, Yonabaru, Buckner Bay: -44 high, -42 low.



CANADA

EUROPE

MIDDLE EAST

City	Hi	Lo	W	City	Hi	Lo	W	City	Hi	Lo	W
Calgary	24	3	Snow	Amsterdam	48	41	PCldy	Ashgabat	57	43	Sun
Edmonton	21	6	Cldy	Athens	61	51	PCldy	Baghdad	84	61	Sun
Halifax	38	12	PCldy	Barbados	44	38	PCldy	Caracas	92	74	Sun
Iqaluit	-1	-13	Snow	Berlin	40	32	Cldy	Dhahran	82	62	Sun
Montreal	43	30	Cldy	Brussels	45	39	PCldy	Islamabad	81	52	PCldy
Ottawa	46	29	Cldy	Dublin	50	37	Rain	Incirlik	78	52	PCldy
Quebec	39	23	Cldy	Glasgow	49	39	Rain	Kabul	54	27	Sun
Regina	21	9	PCldy	Lisbon	63	52	PCldy	Kandahar	74	40	Sun
Toronto	48	44	Rain	London	52	43	PCldy	Karachi	86	67	Sun
Vancouver	38	28	Cldy	Madrid	57	38	PCldy	Kuwait	85	63	Sun
Whitehorse	11	-10	Cldy	Moscow	28	25	Snow	Mazar-e-Sharif	60	38	Sun
Windor	55	47	Rain	Paris	52	43	PCldy	Tehran	64	54	Sun
Winnipeg	23	10	PCldy	Rome	55	41	PCldy	Tel Aviv	91	68	PCldy
Yellowknife	0	-18	Snow	Warsaw	36	34	Fly	Zahedan	64	38	Sun

SATURDAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

City	Hi	Lo	W	City	Hi	Lo	W	City	Hi	Lo	W
Abilene, TX	78	51	PCldy	Colorado Springs	46	22	Cldy	Hartford	55	38	Sun
Alton, OH	62	27	Cldy	Columbus, SC	79	50	Sun	Hartford	90	75	Sun
Albany, NY	50	39	Snow	Columbus, GA	51	50	PCldy	Ashgabat	59	41	Sun
Albuquerque	57	32	PCldy	Columbus, OH	70	53	PCldy	Algiers	59	40	Sun
Allentown, PA	60	41	PCldy	Concord, NH	52	39	PCldy	Caracas	92	74	Sun
Amarillo	63	33	PCldy	Corpus Christi	78	68	PCldy	Casablanca	66	53	Sun
Anchorage	25	10	PCldy	Dallas	78	58	Cldy	Dhahran	82	63	Sun
Asheville	77	44	PCldy	Dayton	69	52	PCldy	Dubai	82	65	Sun
Atlanta	74	52	PCldy	Daytona Beach	76	56	Sun	Dhahran	95	78	Sun
Atlantic City	60	47	PCldy	Denver	44	21	Cldy	Dubai	95	78	Sun
Austin	76	65	PCldy	Des Moines	58	38	Shw	Dubai	95	78	Sun
Baltimore	68	44	PCldy	Detroit	54	45	Rain	Dubai	95	78	Sun
Baton Rouge	75	62	Cldy	Durham	37	23	Cldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Billings	41	34	Snow	El Paso	71	44	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Birmingham	78	55	PCldy	Elkton	73	42	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Bismarck	32	15	Cldy	Lexington	57	49	Cldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Boise	44	28	PCldy	Louisville	73	53	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Boston	51	40	PCldy	Los Angeles	64	48	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Bridgeport	52	40	PCldy	Los Angeles	64	48	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Brownsville	83	69	PCldy	Los Angeles	64	48	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Buffalo	50	46	Cldy	Flagstaff	42	17	Sun	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Burlington	48	34	Cldy	Flint	55	44	Rain	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Caribou, ME	39	21	PCldy	Fort Smith	72	58	Cldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Casper	41	19	Snow	Fort Wayne	64	49	Shw	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Charleston, SC	78	53	Snow	Frederick	63	45	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Charleston, WV	68	56	Snow	Greenwood	46	26	Sun	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Charlotte, NC	76	50	Sun	Grand Junction	47	29	Cldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Chattanooga	77	49	PCldy	Grand Rapids	52	41	Rain	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Cheyenne	33	20	Snow	Great Falls	34	15	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Chicago	60	45	Rain	Greensboro, NC	76	52	Sun	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Cincinnati	70	53	PCldy	Harrisburg	63	45	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun
Cleveland	61	50	Cldy	Nashville	75	55	PCldy	Khartoum	110	72	Sun

For complete and up-to-the-minute worldwide weather information, go to www.stripes.com and check out the AccuWeather forecast.

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SATURDAY'S FORECAST

Northern Japan

Day: A little snow; colder. High 35. Night: A little evening snow. Low 32.

Kanto Plain

Day: An afternoon shower. High 54. Night: Cloudy with a shower. Low 39.

Southern Japan

Day: Cloudy. High 53. Night: Rain and drizzle late. Low 42.

Okinawa

Day: Windy with downpours. High 70. Night: Evening rain. Low 63.

Korea

Day: Milder with some sun. High 49. Night: Cloudy. Low 28.

Guam

Day: An afternoon shower. High 86. Night: Partly cloudy; windy. Low 75.

SUNDAY'S FORECAST

Northern Japan

Day: Decreasing clouds. High 41. Night: Clear and moonlit. Low 27.

Kanto Plain

Day: Rain and drizzle. High 47. Night: Cloudy with a shower. Low 46.

Southern Japan

Day: Mostly cloudy. High 58. Night: Partly cloudy. Low 45.

Okinawa

Day: Clouds yielding to sun. High 71. Night: Partly cloudy. Low 60.

Korea

Day: Becoming cloudy. High 46. Night: Mainly cloudy. Low 27.

Guam

Day: Sunny and windy. High 88. Night: A brief shower or two. Low 75.

MONDAY'S FORECAST

Northern Japan

Day: Plenty of clouds. High 41. Night: Cloudy with snow late. Low 29.

Kanto Plain

Day: Milder with low clouds. High 54. Night: A shower early; cloudy. Low 44.

Southern Japan

Day: An afternoon shower. High 61. Night: Mostly cloudy. Low 51.

Okinawa

Day: An afternoon shower. High 70. Night: Clearing and breezy. Low 60.

Korea

Day: Partly sunny and mild. High 55. Night: Partly cloudy. Low 32.

Guam

Day: Mostly sunny and windy. High 88. Night: A couple of showers. Low 74.

SUN & MOON

	Saturday	Sunday
Sunrise (Seoul)	6:55 a.m.	6:53 a.m.
Sunset	6:33 p.m.	6:34 p.m.

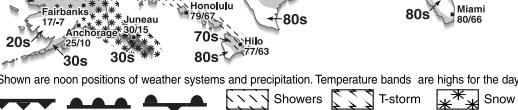
	Saturday	Sunday
Sunrise (Tokyo)	6:03 a.m.	6:01 a.m.
Sunset	5:43 p.m.	5:43 p.m.



Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2009



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



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Cases reopened after bodies found at site

NM ALBUQUERQUE — In the desert outside Albuquerque, hikers have sometimes stumbled upon human remains partially buried under the hardy scrub and hard-baked dirt.

But few people could have imagined the crime scene now emerging: The bones of at least 13 people have been uncovered on the site of an abandoned housing development.

The grisly discovery caused authorities to reopen dozens of cold cases involving missing prostitutes, some of whom vanished as long as 20 years ago.

Police believe one person or group of people is responsible for the slayings, but they have been reluctant to make comparisons to any existing serial murder cases.

So far, only two sets of remains have been identified.

But detectives are reviewing cases involving dozens of women who vanished from the city over the last two decades.

Trail maps help pinpoint locations for responders

NH RANDOLPH — After seven years of work, the state finished mapping and marking more than 1,500 miles of snowmobile trails and logging roads in Coos County, plotting 600 addresses and 75 landing zones for medical helicopters.

The goal is to make it easier for people to report emergencies and help responders save time finding them.

Number of wineries now more than 600

WA YAKIMA — Just 10 years ago, Washington's wine industry was the darling of agriculture, a growing niche industry with a loyal fan base for its 160 wineries.

Today, Washington still can't touch California when it comes to wine production — or even Washington's top crop, apples, when it comes to being the agriculture king.

But as of last month, Washington has licensed 602 wineries, marking a nearly 300 percent increase in just a decade.

"It's great news," said Robin Pollard, executive director of the Washington Wine Commission.

"The natural evolution of our industry, the growth, is indicative of the fact that many people recognize the quality of the grapes that we grow here in Washington, that then can be made into world-class wines."

Moviemakers looking for better incentives

TX AUSTIN — Producers, actors and others who make movies and television shows are launching a big push at the Texas Capitol for the state to improve incentives for the industry.

Gov. Rick Perry, who joined hundreds from the industry for an early morning rally, says too many movie productions have moved to other states like New Mexico, Louisiana and Michigan and that Texas wants their business back.

Perry is proposing \$60 million in incentives in the coming two



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

year state budget as part of his job creation efforts.

Public school's policy: No effort, no grade

PA PITTSBURGH — Public school students here will now receive zero percent on assignments that they don't do, instead of the former minimum failing score of 50 percent.

Officials made the change because critics said some students skipped assignments, knowing they'd still get a 50.

An honest effort will still be worth the 50 percent minimum.

Salmonella outbreak traced to alfalfa sprouts

NE LINCOLN — An outbreak of salmonella in eastern Nebraska was traced to locally grown alfalfa sprouts.

The state health department had confirmed 14 cases, had isolated four probable cases and learned of at least five related cases in neighboring Iowa.

Nebraska chief medical officer Joann Schaefer said the sprouts were sold to restaurants and groceries.

Hopes for studying jaguar dashed by death

AZ TUCSON — Arizona biologists have had to euthanize a jaguar they had outfitted



Midnight mush

Matt Carstens of Whitefield, N.H., leads his team up a hill during the Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Race as he makes his way towards the Two Rivers Lunch restaurant in Allagash, which also serves as the 250-mile race's last checkpoint. Carstens went on to win the race at 3:53 a.m.

with a tracking collar less than two weeks earlier in the hopes of uncovering the elusive big cat's secrets.

An Arizona Game and Fish Department team recaptured the animal southwest of Tucson because it appeared ill; they killed it later that day.

Nicknamed Macho B, it was believed to be the oldest known jaguar in the wild at 15 or 16 years old.

Long a ghostlike presence in Arizona, it had been captured only on environmentalists' tracking cameras over the past dozen years.

Then, on Feb. 18, it became the first wild jaguar in the United States to be radio-collared after it was inadvertently caught in a snare trap set to study bears and mountain lions.

Team members determined from tests at the Phoenix Zoo that the jaguar was in severe, unrecoverable kidney failure, said Bill Van Pelt, the department's non-game bird and mammal program manager.

Judge to figure who owns giant emerald

CA LOS ANGELES — An 840-pound emerald-encrusted rock will remain in the custody of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department while a judge decides which of a half-dozen claimants owns the boulder-sized gem.

The emerald is one of the largest ever found and a judge conceded it will take awhile to sort out all of the competing interests.

The lawyer for one of the purported owners suggested outside court the gem may be a curse for his client.

And the man who first reported it stolen said he was giving up his claims because "I have been threatened."

Larry Biegler, who refused to elaborate on the threats, told Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge John A. Kronstadt he was bowing out of the case.

But it was his call to sheriff's deputies reporting that the emerald had been stolen that led to a multistate caper in which two deputies trucked the mammoth object from Las Vegas.

Man gets jail for lies about brother in Iraq

ID POCATELLO — A man convicted for defrauding merchants with lies about having a brother killed in the war in Iraq must serve at least three years in prison.

Derrick Scott, 40, pleaded guilty to felony theft by deception for scamming at least 10 business owners out of money last year. The money has since been returned.

River healthier but still in need of TLC

OH CLEVELAND — An environmental evaluation found improvement in a river so polluted 40 years ago that it famously caught fire.

But the Cuyahoga River is still not healthy in several ways, including too much algae and too many fish with tumors and other deformities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency study said.

The fire in 1969 involved oil and floating debris.



Clearing the way for art Demolition equipment sits idle at the end of the day next to a former youth detention center in Philadelphia. The area is being cleared to make way for a museum to house the Barnes Foundation art collection.



Where's the basket? Aaron Brown, 17, of Kingston, Wash., does his best impersonation from "ET" as he catches air on his BMX bike at Gateway Park in Silverdale, Wash.



Eagles must like it Scott Mehus, a program specialist at the National Eagle Center, stocks a bait pile with squirrel, rabbit, possum and goose carcasses in Buffalo County, Wis.



We looked! And we saw him!

feline was part of a multistate reading tour, sponsored by the National Education Association, to celebrate its 12th annual Read Across America Day.

The Cat in the Hat arrives in Seuss style at Church Lane Elementary School in Randallstown, Md. The special Cat-a-Van visit by the famous



Pulaski would be proud

Members of the Society of Lancers named in honor of Gen. Thaddeus Kosciusko, prepare to present the colors during a Pulaski Day Celebration at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago. Brig. Gen. Casimir Pulaski, known as the father of the American cavalry, died after being wounded in October 1779 in a battle to take back Savannah, Ga., from the British.

Members of the Society of Lancers named in honor of Gen. Thaddeus Kosciusko, prepare to present the colors during a Pulaski Day Celebration at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago. Brig. Gen.



Barren City Shoppers walk through a nearly empty aisle at a Circuit City store in Las Vegas. Circuit City filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in November as it faced pressure from vendors, heightened competition and waning consumer spending.

Barren City Shoppers walk through a nearly empty aisle at a Circuit City store in Las Vegas.

Circuit City filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in November as it faced

Space heater may be to blame for 2 fire deaths

TX TYLER — Two people have been killed in a house fire outside Tyler. The cause of their deaths wasn't immediately known.

According to the fire marshal, early indications are that a space heater may have caused the fire. Exploding ammunition hampered firefighters battling the blaze.

Embers from the blaze sparked a grass fire behind the house. Firefighters were able to contain that fire before it caused damage to nearby buildings.

Authorities did not release the names of the fire's victims.

Wal-Mart customer finds teeth in wallet

MA FALMOUTH — A customer shopping at a Wal-Mart for a wallet claims he found something that definitely didn't fit the bill: human teeth.

Police say the man found 10 human teeth when he unzipped a compartment in the wallet. One tooth had a filling.

The customer turned the wallet and the teeth over to employees at the Falmouth store but left without giving his name.

Police investigating the incident told The Cape Cod Times that the teeth belong to an adult, but since there was no blood or gum tissue on the teeth, they would be unable to perform DNA tests.

Judge won't suppress evidence in spy case

HI HONOLULU — A federal judge has denied motions by accused Maui spy Noshir Gowadia to suppress statements he made to customs agents and evidence they seized.

The former B-2 stealth bomber engineer is accused of selling military secrets to China.

Gowadia has been indicted on 21 counts of conspiracy, money-laundering and falsifying tax returns. He has pleaded not guilty.

St. Louis mayor grabs nomination for 3rd term

MO ST. LOUIS — St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay easily won the Democratic primary for mayor.

With 100 percent of the city's precincts reporting, unofficial results show the 53-year-old Slay, seeking his third term, got nearly 61.5 percent of the vote.

Former alderwoman Irene Smith garnered about 32 percent of the vote and attorney Denise Watson-Wesley Coleman had 6.5 percent.

No Republicans ran for mayor.

Ski patrol member dead in avalanche at resort

NV RENO — A ski patrol member has been killed in an avalanche at Squaw Valley USA ski resort near Lake Tahoe.

The Squaw Valley Fire Department says Andrew Entin, 41, was working on avalanche controls when he was caught in a slide and partially buried.

More than 4 feet of snow fell at upper elevations of the region over a 24-hour period.

Nearly a 100-mile stretch of U.S. Interstate 80 is closed west of Reno.

Nurse's assistant charged in fatal freezing

IL WHEATON — A nurse's assistant faces felony charges of criminal neglect in the death of a woman whose frozen body was found in a snowbank outside her nursing home, prosecutors said.

Heidi Leon, 23, of Bensenville, was named in five felony counts in connection with Sarah Wentworth's death at The Arbor of Itasca.

Wentworth, 89, left the nursing home in extremely cold weather on Feb. 5 and was found dead in a snowbank in the courtyard, DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett said.

Leon did not check on residents after Wentworth's exit triggered a door alarm and she also lied to police, he said.

"The death of Sarah Wentworth was not an accident," Birkett said.

"If these allegations are proven true ... Heidi Leon failed to provide that care and in doing so took a beloved matriarch from her family."

2 girls caught in crossfire of shooting

TX AUSTIN — Austin police are looking for a suspect in a shooting that injured four people, including two young girls playing nearby.

The injuries were not life-threatening.

Cpl. Scott Perry said gunshots were fired at an apartment complex in North Austin. He said there was a disturbance in the apartment parking lot before the shootings.

Cabbies urged to donate tips to orphan twins

NY NEW YORK — New York City taxi drivers are being asked to donate one day's tips to 13-year-old twins whose immigrant parents were killed in a hit-and-run accident.

The New York State Federation of Taxi Drivers organized the fundraiser, which will benefit Omar and Kareem Elnahal of Staten Island.

Their father, 50-year-old Mohamed El-Nahal, was a livery cab driver.

He and his wife, 52-year-old Mervat Saad Ibrahim, were killed on Feb. 14, when their cab was broadsided by a car that police say had run a red light.

The parents' bodies were flown home for burial in Cairo, Egypt.

Judge invalidates Aloha Airline's name auction

HI HONOLULU — U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Lloyd King invalidated an auction held to sell the name of Aloha Airlines.

King said the Dec. 2 auction for the defunct carrier's brand and logo wasn't publicly held, as required by law.

The ruling derailed Mesa Air Group's plan to change the name of its go! airlines to Aloha.

Aloha filed for bankruptcy and folded its passenger service last March.

The airline blamed high fuel prices and a two-year airfare price war triggered by the entry of go! into Hawaii's interisland market in 2006.

Stories and photos from wire services

SAILORS OF THE YEAR

NEX/SUBWAY WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL
YOU ARE TRULY "THE"



Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
CS1(SW) Karlene V. Henry
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
BM2(SW) Karina Gasca
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
MA2 Charles A. Nailon



Commander, Fleet Air WestPac
SENIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AM1(AW) Travis W O'Dell
STAFF SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK1(SW) Noel M Tayag
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
YN2(SW) William D Brown



Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
NC1(SW/AW) Zackary Darth Hayes Kiser



Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
MA1(SW) Andrew J Black



Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment Atsugi (AIMD)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK1(AW) Adriana Cabarcas
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AD3(AW) Fernando R Lopez



USS George Washington (CVN 73)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
MM1(SW/AW) Thomas G. Orlando



USS John McCain (DDG 56)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
FC1(SW) William Sydney Walters
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
ET2(AW) Andrew Sejin Jung
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
BMSN Adarius Olaneye Carr



Regional Legal Service Office, Japan
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
LN1(SW/AW) Wanda L Smylie



Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron One One Five
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AE1 Scott A Guernsey
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AM2(AW) Joshua E Fleming
PLANE CAPTAIN OF THE YEAR
AM3 William L Killingsworth



Fleet and Industrial Supply Center
SENIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
PC1(SW/AW) Brian O Garfield
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
YN2(SW) Lorraine A Pablo
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
PC3(AW/SW) Marlene K Walton
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
PC3 Nancy Cid



Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
MA1 Michael B Therkildsen
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AM2(AW) Craig F Whyte
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
MA3 Arieal E Bobb



Strike Fighter Squadron One Nine Two
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK1(AW) Nicholas Caciopoli
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AT2(AW) Matthew Noto



Ship Repair Facility, Yokosuka Japan
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
ET1 Joseph Fulton



Helicopter Squadron Light 5
SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SEA)
AT1(AW) Heath R Hillesheim
SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SHOR)
AT1(AW) Darrick Tolentino
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SEA)
AD2(AW) Robin C Santos
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SHOR)
AD2(AW) Herman D Demorizi
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
PRAN Rommel S Rubi



NAF Misawa
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
HM1 Lisa A Hovde



USS Mustin
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK1(SW) Clarence R Walker
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
EM2(SW) Jared Hawthorne
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
GSMFN Andra F Florea



Expeditionary Strike Group Seven
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK1(SW/AW) Yayah Sesay
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
PS3(SW) Anthony J Vandover



US Naval Hospital Yokosuka Japan
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
HM1(SW) Tameeka L Washington
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
HM2 Glenn Gagarin
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
HN Travis D Tucker



Commander Strike Group Seven Zero
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
LN1(SW/AW) Shawn Sargent
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
BM3(SW/AW) David Lavko



Afloat Training Group Western Pacific
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
DC1(SW) Shenia Nurse
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
YN2(SW) Marshea Taylor

THE YEAR 2008

ALL OF THE FLEET & SHORE "SAILORS OF THE YEAR" THE FACES OF THE FDNF"



Defense Distribution Center,
Yokosuka Japan

JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
SK2(SW) Ivy Dizol Cristobal



Commander, Destroyer Squadron Fifteen
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
CS1(SW/AW)
Deforest Leonard Pittman
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
IT2(SW/AW)
Laura Wingsea Gong



Navy Information
Operations Command Yokosuka
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
CTT1(SW) Leon Jordan Jr



Center Surface
Combat Systems, Yokosuka
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
OS1 Darius Luna



Commander, U. S. Naval Forces Japan
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
YN1(SW/AW) Harvey L Hill
SAILOR OF THE YEAR (RESERVE UNIT)
BM1(SW) Danula
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
STG2(SW/US) Benjamin Isaac Pittenger
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR (RESERVE UNIT)
PS2(AW) Nicholas D Tautges



Naval Oceanography AntiSubmarine
Warfare Center Yokosuka Japan
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SEA)
AG2(SW) Travis Howard Muth
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR (SHORE)
AG3 Matthew Shane McAleer



Naval Air Facility Atsugi
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
ABE1(AW/SW) Michael A Showers
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
CS2 Jonathon K Yates



Strike Fighter Squadron Two Seven
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AM1(AW) Brian Foster



Naval Facilities
Engineering Command Far East
(NAVFAC FE)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
CE1(SCW) Ferdinand Diwa



Carrier Air Wing Five(CVW-5)
AIRWING SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AM1(AW) Brian Foster
STAFF SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AO1(AW) Jocque Smith



Strike Fighter Squadron One Nine Five
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AME1(AW) Michael Turigan



Strike Fighter Squadron One Zero Two
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AO1(AW) Jorge Maldonado
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AT2(AW) Marcus W Warner



Electronic Attack Squadron
One Three Six
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AD1(AW) Crisanto Reyes



Helicopter Anti-Submarine
Squadron Fourteen (HS-14)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AT1(AW) Carl Surom



USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
FC1(SW/AW) Brian D White
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
FC2(SW) James T Erhard
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
CSSN Jonathan B Money



Fleet Logistics Support
Squadron Three Zero
(VRC-30)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
AWF1(AW/NAC) Kenneth Fillpot



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
PO3 Tomokazu Ishikawa
Takahiro Mori
Shogo Chiba



USS Shiloh CG-67
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
FC1(SW) John B. Stamey
JUNIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR
GSE1(SW) Akwasi Fosu
BLUE JACKET OF THE YEAR
SK2(SW) Shauntez S. Fair



US Naval Computer and
Telecommunications Station Far East
(NCTSFE)
SAILOR OF THE YEAR
YN1(SW/AW) Dewayne Watson

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By MICHAEL SMERCONISH
The Philadelphia Inquirer

I have a renewed appreciation of my access to health care after witnessing the passing of a loved one last month. She outlasted most survival curves because of the financial resources available for her care, the competency of her medical providers, and the corresponding availability of her medication.

The laminated card in my wallet tells me those things are available to me, too. But they remain out of reach for more than 45 million Americans. There is something seriously out of whack where she got what many Americans cannot.

My memories are more raw than reflective. We did so many things together over so many years, but the fact that she enjoyed a full life is still of little consolation. All that seems to matter now is that she's gone. I know in time that I'll reflect on the pictures, videos and JPEGs with fond memory, but not yet. Instead, I'm paralyzed by decisions like whether to remove the bed in which she steadily declined for months. For now, it remains untouched.

In the end, she just ran out of steam. A combination of old age, kidney dysfunction and the residual harm from an environmental disease took their toll. She couldn't keep food down, dropped lots of weight, and ultimately lost large clumps of her hair. Then came the end.

She was never provided health insurance early in life and, by the time she was an adult, her medical course made it cost-prohibitive. Still, money was not a factor because of my availability to directly provide for her. I would sooner have mortgaged the house than let money stand in the way of obtaining her care. Which made her unique in the current climate.

Those resources afforded her tremendous medical attention. Dr. Matthias Gensler, her primary caregiver, is old-school — hands on, unhurried and legitimately concerned. (Even his name is straight out of Mayberry.) She underwent emergency

treatment after a fall close to Christmas. During a 10-day hospitalization, she received a full workup from both an orthopedist and a neurologist. All of which improved her quality of life and extended her time to the equivalent of 98 years.

Only now do I realize how lucky I was to have her around for that long. There are too many people in this country who wouldn't have the resources to take the measures I did. Forget caring for a best friend. They wouldn't be able to afford the right medical treatment for themselves. I can't imagine having that kind of uncertainty and helplessness always hovering just around the corner.

My experience reminded me of an exchange between Barack Obama and John McCain during the second presidential debate last fall. Tom Brokaw asked each whether health care in America is a privilege, a right, or a responsibility. McCain deemed it a responsibility — one assumed by employers and small businesses. He then explained his aversion to government-mandated health care.

Obama differed: "Well, I think it should be a right for every American. In a country as wealthy as ours, for us to have people who are going bankrupt because they can't pay their medical bills — for my mother to die of cancer at the age of 53 and have to spend the last months of her life in the hospital room arguing with insurance companies because they're saying that this may be a preexisting condition and they don't have to pay for her treatment — there's something fundamentally wrong about that."

Right or responsibility? I'm still not sure where I fall in that regard. But I can better appreciate why health-care reform will play such a significant role in President Obama's budget plan.

During his recent address to the joint session of Congress, the president made several references to the "crushing cost of health care." His words dealt mostly with the financial. Left to run rampant, he said,

the rising cost of health care now causes a bankruptcy every 30 seconds. Millions could lose their homes. Millions have already been priced out of their coverage.

And now I know this: All that doesn't even begin to explain what else the uninsured stand to lose when they can't afford medical care.

In the end, no sum could provide my friend what she required. Last Saturday night was our last together. We snuggled on the sofa and watched TV in front of a simmering fire. Last Sunday, she took a turn for the worse, and by Monday I was sure she let me know she'd lost her fight. She wasn't speaking, but her eyes told me it was time. She wanted rest of the permanent kind.

Yes, she's gone. And like Hall & Oates once sang, I'd pay the devil to replace her. Even though they weren't referring to a Labrador.

Michael Smerconish writes a weekly column for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

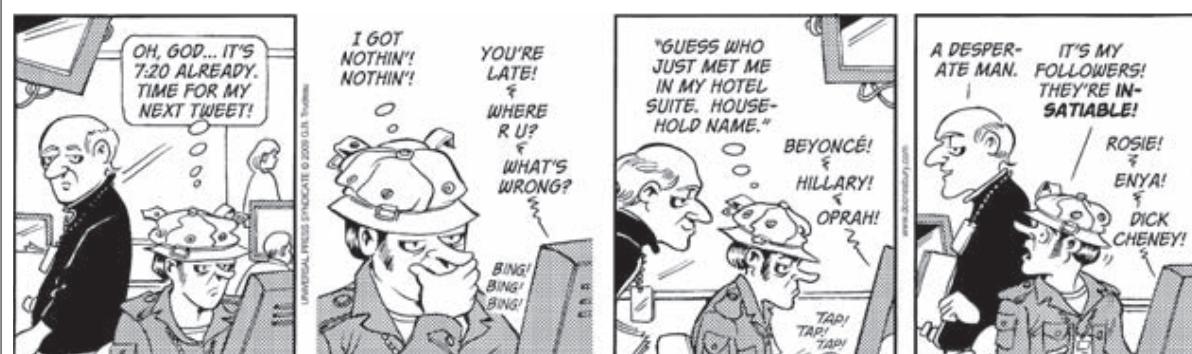
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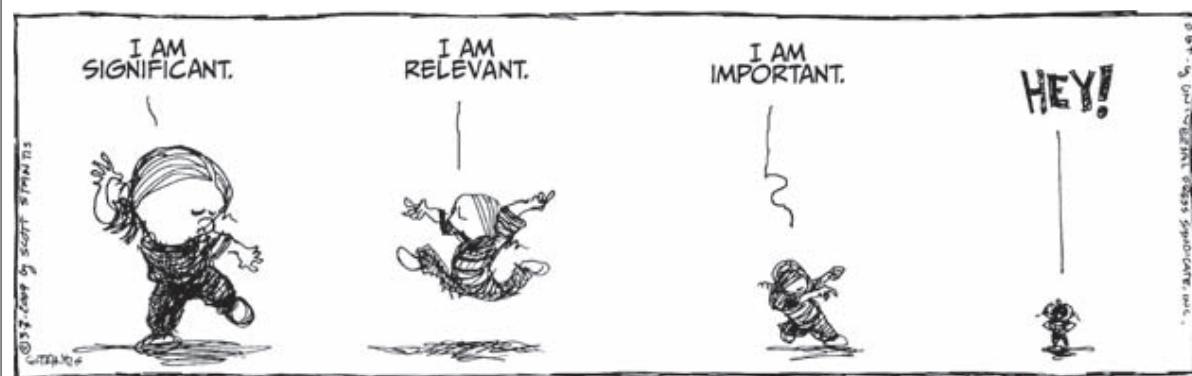
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BY GARRY TRUDEAU



Prickly City



Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



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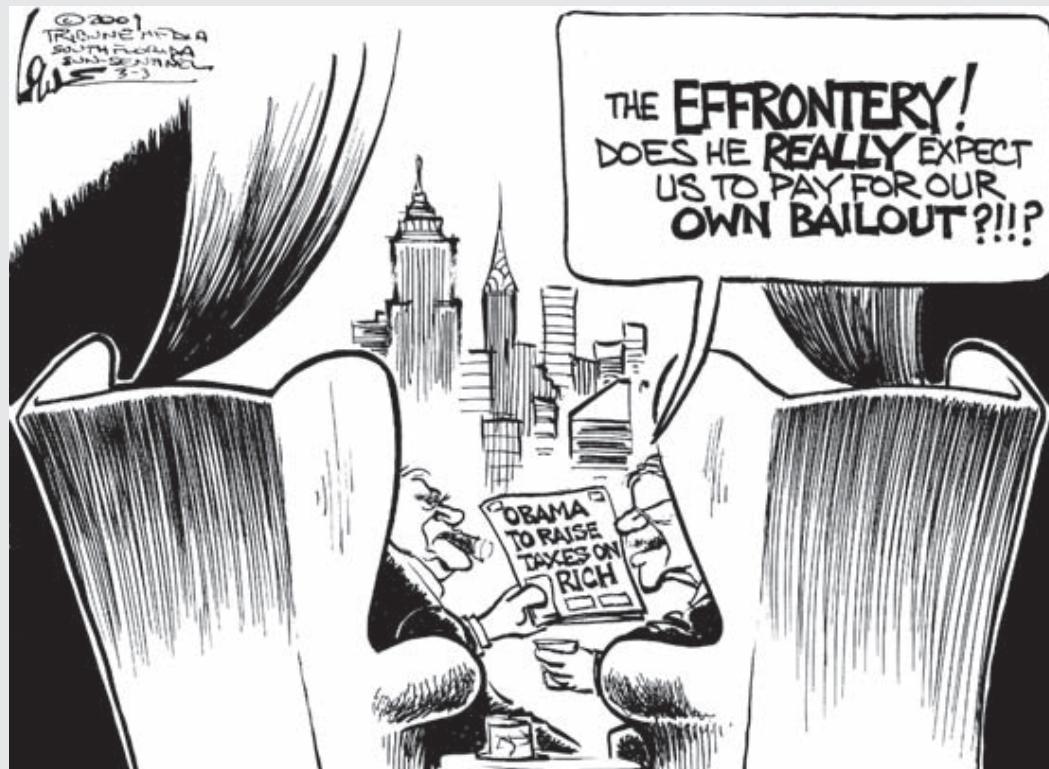
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Horoscope

The moon slips into Leo like an actor doing a quick costume change. This "outfit" is a guaranteed crowd pleaser. Excitement heightens and everyone is waiting to be entertained. If you feel compelled to do your act for others, whether it's making a fabulous meal, telling a story or simply sharing a winning smile, you can expect a hardy response.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (MARCH 7)

It's an action-packed year. You get a thrill from taking social risks and they pay off with new friends and a bigger network. In April, you can sense a new project will make you money and you dive right in. In the late spring, you'll be starry-eyed for someone — perhaps the person you have known for years. Capricorn and Sagittarius adore you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You're usually careful to present yourself in the best light. Right now you're not worried about such things. Informality is appropriate. When you feel free and comfortable you make people laugh.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Though of course it's ideal to feel wonderful about yourself regardless of the reaction you elicit from the rest of the world, it might be fun to turn a few heads today. Spiff up. Put in an extra effort and wear some color.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

You're in an individualistic mode, certain that you can do more alone than you could as a team. You're right. Your vision is so specific, only you can accomplish it your way.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

When outsiders look at your social set, they may see it as a clique. However, you do make an effort to include anyone who seems like they want to be included. Double up on that kind of an effort today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Even if you think you have nothing you want

Holiday Mathis



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Creating a rendezvous to remember takes equal parts planning and spontaneity. Can you plan to be spontaneous? Things will work brilliantly if you make room to explore the unexpected.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

It's your aim to do good deeds — that's just how you are. Today, it's important that you forget your acts of kindness once they are done. Wracking up benevolent karma is about not keeping score.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You are unraveling a problem bit by bit. That's why your dreams have been so lively lately. Can you remember them? There are wise insights to be gleaned from tracking the journey of your subconscious.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You love to get the finer things in life at a bargain price. Such deals come your way if you venture out. One stylish purchase could change the way you are perceived by others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

To worry about being rejected is a normal part of being human. Go ahead and put yourself out there anyway. You will be so happy that you followed your more courageous impulses.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Raw charisma might make people look your way, but it's refined manners that will draw others into your realm of influence. With your gracious charm you will make new and interesting friends.

Creators Syndicate

SU/DO/KU

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Difficulty: Easy

Fill in the boxes so that each row, column and 3-by-3 square includes the digits 1 through 9. For solution, tips and computer program, see www.sudoku.com

Yesterday's Solution

3	6	9	2	1	7	4	5	8
8	7	4	3	9	5	6	2	1
2	1	5	6	4	8	9	7	3
6	5	3	8	7	2	1	4	9
1	9	2	5	3	4	7	8	6
7	4	8	9	6	1	5	3	2
9	2	6	7	5	3	8	1	4
4	8	7	1	2	9	3	6	5
5	3	1	4	8	6	2	9	7

3 7 4 5 9 2 8 6 1

to sell and there is nothing you really need from people, you will be promoting yourself. You can't help but do so. You just show up and people will buy into your you-ness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Seeing someone else live what is supposed to be your dream will kick-start your motivation. You quickly change your internal vocabulary from "that should be me..." to "What's the next step?"

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7	4	8	9	6	1	5	3	2
9	2	6	7	5	3	8	1	4
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PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Raw charisma might make people look your way, but it's refined manners that will draw others into your realm of influence. With your gracious charm you will make new and interesting friends.

Creators Syndicate

to sell and there is nothing you really need from people, you will be promoting yourself. You can't help but do so. You just show up and people will buy into your you-ness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Seeing someone else live what is supposed to be your dream will kick-start your motivation. You quickly change your internal vocabulary from "that should be me..." to "What's the next step?"

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SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

It's your aim to do good deeds — that's just how you are. Today, it's important that you forget your acts of kindness once they are done. Wracking up benevolent karma is about not keeping score.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You are unraveling a problem bit by bit. That's why your dreams have been so lively lately. Can you remember them? There are wise insights to be gleaned from tracking the journey of your subconscious.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You love to get the finer things in life at a bargain price. Such deals come your way if you venture out. One stylish purchase could change the way you are perceived by others.

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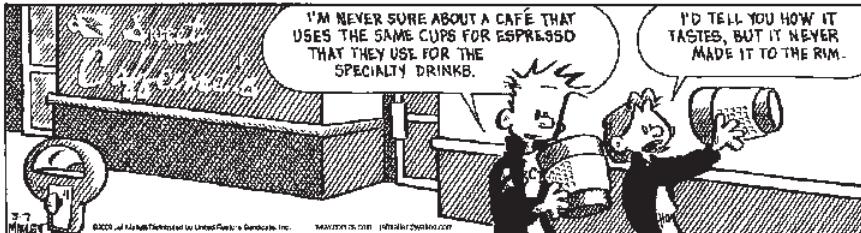
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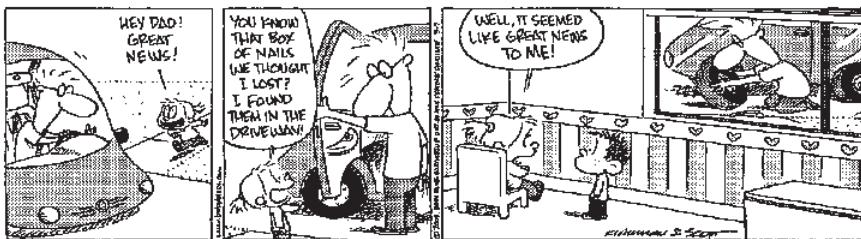
Frazz



Garfield



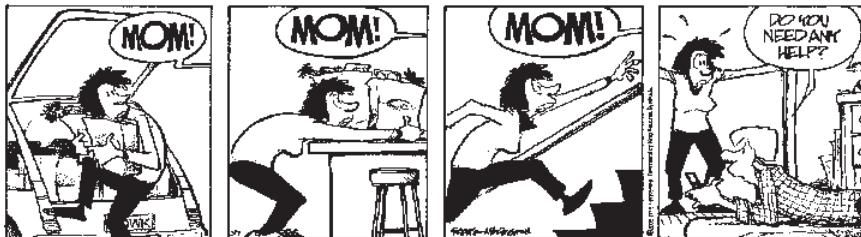
Baby Blues



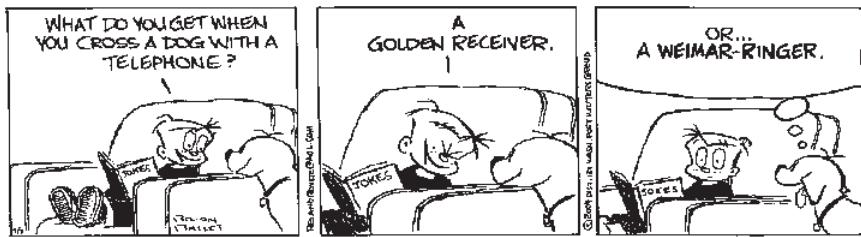
Jump Start



Zits



Red & Rover



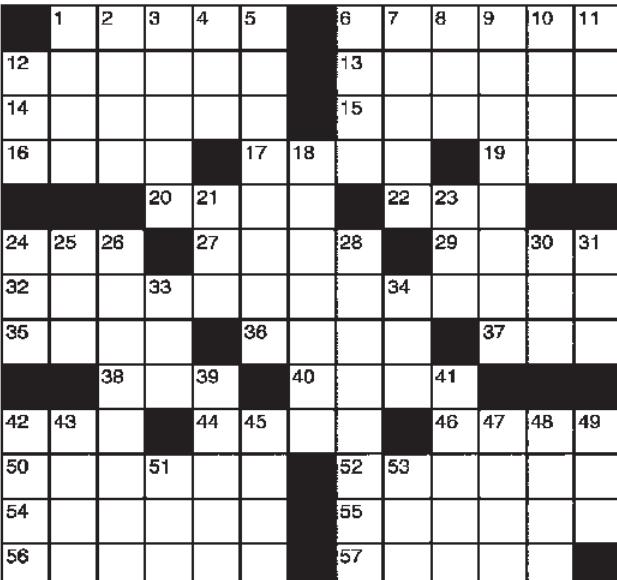
Hagar



Better or Worse



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



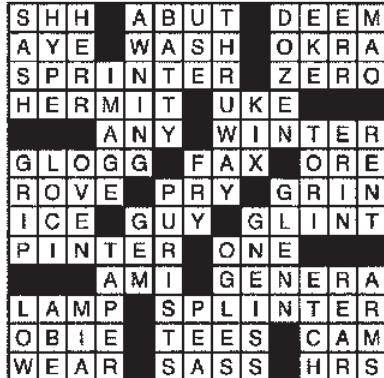
ACROSS

- 1 Ponzi schemes, e.g.
- 6 Soul
- 12 Put a hex on
- 13 La Scala shows
- 14 Not alfresco
- 15 Most updated
- 16 Culture medium
- 17 BPOE members
- 19 "Eureka!"
- 20 She loved Narcissus
- 22 A welcome sight?
- 24 Illustrations
- 27 Chops
- 29 Wait patiently
- 32 Old sitcom starring Walter Brennan
- 35 Early hours
- 36 A-line creator
- 37 Lepidopterist's device
- 38 Snoop Dogg's genre
- 40 Vaudeville family
- 42 Kona keepsake
- 44 Help a hood
- 46 Small combo
- 50 Apennine region
- 52 Lloyd of old movies ...
- 54 ... described thus
- 55 OK to munch on
- 56 Has a rendezvous

23 Regis' network

- 24 \$ dispenser
- 25 Pi follower
- 26 Quite
- 28 Not so bumpy
- 30 Do Easter eggs
- 31 "Guinness Book" suffix
- 33 Geneticist's abbr.
- 34 Wail
- 39 Emulate Michelangelo
- 41 Denude
- 42 A Deadly Sin
- 43 Eastern bigwig
- 45 Dugout supply
- 47 Judicial garb
- 48 Troubles
- 49 Praise in verse
- 51 — judicata
- 53 Commotion

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-7

CRYPTOQUIP

WIARA SADTP ZNSR XDYA WN
 BNN NMXQ LW MDUIW. QNK
 BDUIW ZLXX WIAB XNS -
 DM - WIA - PLTY ZTALWKTAR.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A CONSPIRACIOUSLY
 COLORFUL FELLOW WERE FLOATING IN WATER,
 I SUPPOSE HE MIGHT BE FLAM-BUOYANT.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals T

Psychiatry jokes not so funny

Dear Abby: Will you please explain to your readers that doctors do not practice medicine 24 hours a day?

Each time we reveal to people that my husband is a psychiatrist, we have to put up with unfunny jokes about how he's going to analyze them, or insinuations that all he does is sit on a couch and ask, "And how do you feel about that?"

How should we respond to these misconceptions?

— Not Laughing in Iowa

Dear Abby



Dear Not Laughing: The attempts at humor are not a reflection on your husband or the psychiatric profession. They are a clue that the person may be afraid that if he or she opens up and talks with him, he may realize that he or she is "crazy."

Your question takes me back to my childhood, when our family

lived in the Midwest and the first psychiatrist moved to the city and opened a practice.

For months, no one would talk to the poor man for exactly that reason.

When people "joke" that your husband is going to analyze them, he should smile and say, "Don't worry — I'm off duty." (If I were in his shoes, I'd be tempted to ask, "... and how do you feel about that?")

Dear Abby: I am at a loss as to how to deal with family members who constantly text others while supposedly visiting us or when we're having dinner out together.

I personally find it rude, but I am reluctant to ask them to put it away.

Do you have a snappy comment for me?

— Non-texter in a Texting World

Dear Non-texter: What your family members are doing is extremely rude.

The message it sends to you is that your company is boring and the person would rather be elsewhere. (Indeed, the person who is texting IS elsewhere.)

Tell your family members that when they visit, you would prefer they keep their electronic devices off until they leave.

(If this happened while I was hosting a meal, I think I'd ask for a separate check and tell them why.)

Dear Readers: For those of you who live where Daylight Saving Time is observed, I offer a gentle reminder.

Don't forget to turn your clocks forward one hour before you go to bed tonight because Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. tomorrow.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

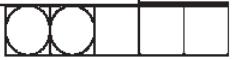
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GLITH



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FRAWE



NACAMI



INGALC



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Mike Argirion and Jeff Knurek



3
EXPERIENCED BY TELEPHONE USERS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

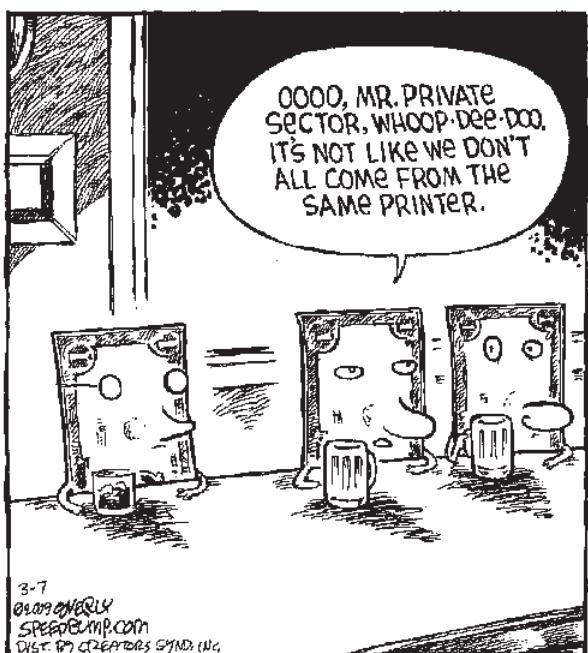
Ans: (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's

Jumbles: PURGE EXULT TIPTOE BURLAP

Answer: What the astronomy club was known as — A "PEER" GROUP

Speed Bump



3-7 ©2009 CREATLY SPEEDBUMP.COM DIST. BY CREATORS SYND. INC.

Pearls Before Swine



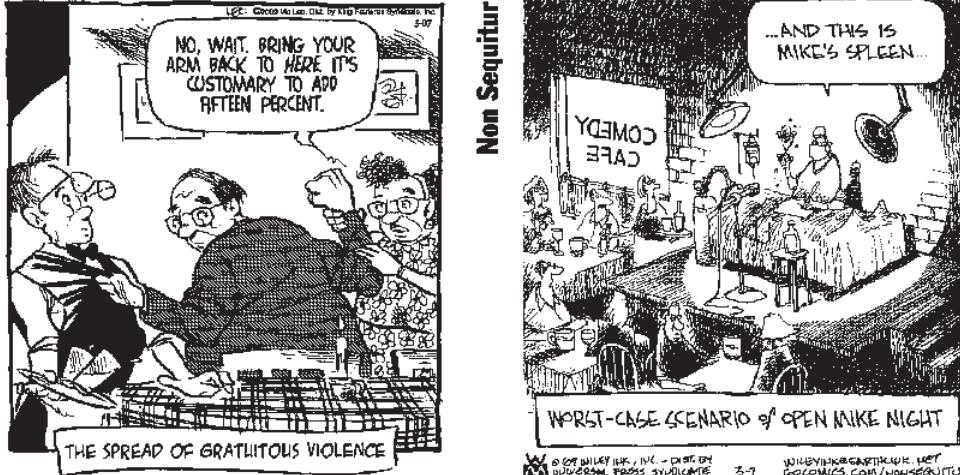
B.C.



Over The Hedge



Pardon My Planet



Non Sequitur



Strange Brew



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- Please spell out each word. No abbreviations.
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Shop Online!**

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Over 600 APO/FPO Stores
Auto to Video Games
Merchant Rating System
Monthly Photo Contest
Online Military Loans
www.oconus.com

Autos for Sale 141

Yokota, Japan - 1995 Black Skyline GTS-T (single turbo) I've owned this Skyline for 4 Months. It has black soft leather seat covers and an air purifier. I had the oil changed at Nissens. I have the receipt and it has a warrantee for one year. JCI until April 2010 asking \$2300 I'm selling because I'm getting married and need a bigger car this car is very fast and easy to drive and looks great! Please call 080-3421-9061

Yokota, Japan - 1996 Honda Odyssey, Blue Minivan w/2500. Runs great! JCI until June 2010. CD/MP3 player, power windows/locks, A/C, DR, AT, 86,000 km. Contact: jclaviermodovar@gmail.com or call Javier @ 410-674-7038 @ Yokota AB

Yokota - 1996 Nissan Skyline GTS-Four Door RB20E inline 6 Engine, Automatic, Transmisison, GPS System, Automatic Climate Control, Power Mirrors, Windows, Door locks, Tinted Windows, \$1,500. OBO. Contact AJ @ (904)328-2070

Yokota - 1999 Subaru Wagon, Silver, Automatic, Air, CD, 85,000 Kilometers, New JCI good until 2011. \$2500 Or Best Offer. Call 225-0011 or 1-973-9089.

Yokota, Japan - 1996 Honda Accord \$1700 - JCI is good until April 2010. I've never had any problems out of this car. It rides like a 5-speed but it is still an automatic with great music system, CD player & AC/Heater. If you have any further questions, please contact me. 225-8484 or email shaunet.williams@us.af.mil Thanks

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Yokota, Japan - 1996 Toyota Camry (Gray w/b

STRIPES CLASSIFIED

Furniture 510

Yokota, Japan - Rolling trunk chests--must go now I have a few black color (Did not buy here, bought in the states) ROLLING trunk chests w/ wheels. These are great for getting organized. You could also use them for storing holiday decor, organizing a shed or patio area. We our downsizing what we have now for our big move. We have no use for them anymore, and I would like to see them put to great use. It's only asking \$25 each trunk CHEST ask that one seller buyers please can use. If we are not home, please leave name/number, I'm sorry I do not have pictures please come see in person. Please call 916-473-4488

Furniture/Appliances 511

Yokota, Japan - 2007 Mitsubishi Japanese Conventional/Microwave Co Model RO-B1C, Micro-wave Cooks at 600 and 1000 Watts. Conventional Oven up to 300 degrees Celsius, inside measures 16.5" x 10.5" inches and can accommodate around 18 lb Turkey, perfect for off base homes w/o ovens. Easy to use and reliable can cook anything in it. Asking \$200 Please call 080-6596-9611

Yokota, Japan - Microwave Works great (very strong), nothing wrong with it just upgraded to a new microwave asking \$25. Please call 1-720-257-6781

Household Items 560

Yokota, Japan - Beautiful House Plant Healthy house plant, water once a week and the plant will live forever. Asking \$30 Please call 080-6596-9611

Yokota, Japan - Large set of dishes. I have a full set of dishes for setting 8. Includes large, medium, and small saucer plates, small and regular sized bowls, coffee mugs, and a serving bowl. Asking \$75 OBO. Please e-mail hummershea@att.net

Household Items 560

Yokota, Japan - Full/Queen Size ComforSet -exc. shape really nice. Full/Queen Size. Great set excellent shape. I just took everything 2 the cleaners, so whoever buys this set, it's all ready to go. This set does not have a wild, bold design. It's solid, natural, neutral colors 2 go w/ just about any decor. It's chenille feel w/ suede trim (suede trim on back/velveteen (back for curtains). Individually Comforter, Seal, Best Fit Sheet SET, 2 Curtain Panels 2 Tie Backs, Valance, Decor Pillow, Bed Skirt, super soft Berkshire blanket, pillow shams, square pillow cover, & much more. (I paid 2 send the curtains/valance back 2 states to have drapery hook option installed. Paid a bit more. This set plus 2 have drapery hook option installed. & 2 have it all cleaned at cleaners. Only asking \$160 Call 916-473-4488

Home Electronics 570

Yokota, Japan - Great Home Theater System I have a pioneer sub, center speaker, and receiver. I paid \$1000. Sony and rear speakers are Sony bookshelf speakers. Speakers all sound great together. If you'd like to come take a look at them email me at skip592@hotmail.com or call 720-257-6786. Any reasonable offer will be accepted. Best Offer.

Yokota, Japan - Home Theater System new photo I have a Pioneer receiver, center speaker, subwoofer. They were all part of a theater in a box that I bought originally, and put 2 side speakers. I have added 2 book shelf speakers for rear speakers. I would like to sell it all together. Although they are different brands they sound great together. The receiver puts out 1000 watts between the 5 speakers and subwoofer. Also the Sony speakers were just recently bought for over \$225 alone. E-mail skip592@hotmail.com for questions

Yokota, Japan - Infinity SM125 Floor Speakers (Set) Ground pounders! Down-sizing to smaller set and hate to let these go. Used and in great condition. Comes with original box, practically flawless condition. Can take AMPS but never drove them that hard. MUST SEE! Price is firm. They are simply in great shape! Asking \$200 Please call 090-2902-7760 or email axnjnx1701@yahoo.com

Yokota, Japan - Yamaha Home Theater YST-SW320 Great subwoofer in new like new condition. I just upgraded to a bigger speaker. Also comes with a monster cable. Give me a call 1-720-257-6781 or email knighton@hotmail.com if you have any questions. For your peace of mind, I will put an offer I am willing to come down in price. Asking \$4000 OBO please call 090-2911-5621 or 080-3381-6206 (cell) or 080-3381-6206 (home).

Home Electronics 570

Yokota, Japan - Nintendo Wii Like NEW - Includes Wii Fit and Other like new Nintendo Wii with original box. The following (in original packaging) - Controller, Nunchuk, Perfect Shot Gun Controller -GameCube/Wii-compatible Controller -Wii Fit (w/ Family Game Night) -The Price is Right -NCAA College Football 2009 -Wii Sports -Resident Evil 4 -Harvey Birdman Also, includes the following: GameCube Games: Army Men: Strike, War-Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 -The Scorpion King -Second Sight -StarSky & Hutch Asking \$500 OBO. Please call 813-200-9377 or email juddbean@gmail.com

Yokota, Japan - Yamaha RX-R1400 Home Theater Receiver. Awesome home theater receiver in like new condition. Only reason I'm selling is because I upgraded to a new Denon receiver. Never abused and have all packing material.

Please give me a call or email if you have any questions. Asking \$200. Please call 1-720-257-6781. For specs please go to Yamaha website: http://www.yamaha.com/mfr/yamaha/a-v-receivers/rx-v1400/PRD_288782_27180rcx.aspx

Jewelry 610

Yokota, Japan - 1.00 ct. Leo Diamond Solitaire Engagement Ring. About 1.50 mm. 1400 ct. Color: I (near colorless), Clarity: SI (I). Cut: round (brilliant). The diamond is set in 4 prong platinum setting. The ring itself is white 14 Karat Gold. On the inside of the ring there is a small diamond for the "O" in "THE LEO". Email me for more pictures and questions. For your peace of mind, I will put an offer I am willing to come down in price. Asking \$4000 OBO please call 090-2911-5621 or 080-3381-6206 (cell) or 080-3381-6206 (home).

Yokota, Japan - Yamaha Home Theater YST-SW320 Great subwoofer in new condition. I just upgraded to a bigger speaker. Also comes with a monster cable. Give me a call 1-720-257-6781 or email knighton@hotmail.com if you have any questions. For your peace of mind, I will put an offer I am willing to come down in price. Asking \$4000 OBO please call 090-2911-5621 or 080-3381-6206 (cell) or 080-3381-6206 (home).

Jobs Offered 630

US Embassy - Employee Association Preschool Director: Graduate with early education degree; work experience with NAEYC; early education standards; fluency in English; management experience desired; American residence preferred. Send resume to: Marc Horino, EWA President, US Embassy Tokyo, 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 107-8420

Project Manager - Japan Institute of Environment Protection (JIEP) seeks a Project Manager for its environmental protection projects. Coordinator will be responsible for managing entire projects including estimation processes. Person with background and experience of such projects, and was retired from the US military in Japan is desired. For detail, please e-mail: JIEP.recruit@gmail.com

Or send resume to following address: KW-Residence-Hanazono 601, Kojimachi 3-10-2, Chiyoda, Tokyo 102-0083.

Outdoor Living 775

Yokota - Gas Grill with 2 propane tanks, 1-720-257-6781. Asking \$100.00. Please call 813-200-9379.

Pets 820

Atsugi - Need temporary foster home for loving cat. She is up to date on all shots, black and white shorthair, about 1 year old. I no longer have a home where she can stay with me and am PCSing in April. I'd like to find a nice home for her to stay in until I PCS, then I will take her with me. Please contact me immediately if you are interested. Call 080-541-1414. Home: 70-131-120. E-mail: johncat@hotmail.com. Or c. tarissa@hotmail.com OR johathan.McGough@fe.navy.mil

Yokota - Free to a good home, 2 adult, male cats. Very affectionate and loving. I am PCSing and want to make sure they have a good home. 09060438502

Pets 820

Yokota, Japan - 2 Cats Need Loving Home. I have 2 cats that need a good home. They are about a year old, they are brothers, very loving. They have had their shots but are on the waiting list to get neutered due to limited slots available. I would like to keep them together if possible. They come with feed dish, 2 bags of food, toys, floor to ceiling cage, and a cat box and plenty of affection. I need to get them in a home ASAP. I hate to give them away, but I just don't have the time with 3 kids to take care of them. Please give my boys a good home, FREE! Please email maxx9950@gmail.com

Photography 830

Yokota, Japan - Kodak Easy Share V610 Camera with lots of extras. Camera is in excellent condition. It comes with camera, 512 MB memory stick, original box, software, user's manual; it also comes with a camera kit. The kit includes docking station, leather carrying case & lens cleaner and cleaning cloth. It also comes with a HP photo smart 7760 printer, printer with about 70% of ink left. The printer also has original box. Asking \$300 OBO. Jason Home 713-149-0-578 C e l l 08032519808

Homes/Apts for Rent - US 866

3 bdr/2 bth 1,460 square foot 2 story home for rent in McWayne, VA. Located close to CNU, Ft Eustis, Langley AFB, and Ft Monroe. Pets okay. Monthly rent is \$1,125. Please contact Julie Zollner at 080-3381-6206 (cell) or 263-8437 (home).

Yokota, Japan - 1 all weight loss pills for men 54 capsules left in bottle; only used 6. Paid \$60; asking \$4.5 o b o C o n t a c t griffsgirl30@hotmail.com

Yokota, Japan - 98 Custom Pro W/E-Grip + Cyclone feed RIPSI This Custom Pro is loaded with all you need E-Grip, Cyclone feed, Camo kit 14inch Evil Driver barrel, 20oz c02, parts kit, 2 O-Ring kits Quick load hopper X-7 style gravity hopper, BB's. Perfect for TAMA. Asking \$200 e-mail jhgerber@yahoo.com

Toys 945

Yokota, Japan - Team Losi Nitro 1/8 scale RC Truggy that I am selling. It comes as a roller with and OS 28xz and Mach 427 that have been modded by Pro-Mod RC. It has a lot of extra parts, Servo, box, and glow igniter. You will have a great time and serve \$300 OBO I am at Yokota will meet half way. Please call 720-257-6843

Sporting Goods 980

Yokota, Japan - 2 Snow Boarding Goggles For Sale Wear only once. Interested? Look for Jenny 1- 425 274 -4394 jennybg808@yahoo.com asking \$25

Yokota, Japan - Weider weight set plus more Weider bar bell and dumb bell with screw on weight holders, 4 bars 16 plates; 8 plates chrome \$40 for both. Call 0143354904

Miscellaneous 1040

Yokota - all weight loss pills for men 54 capsules left in bottle; only used 6. Paid \$60; asking \$4.5 o b o C o n t a c t griffsgirl30@hotmail.com

Yokota, Japan - 98 Custom Pro W/E-Grip + Cyclone feed RIPSI This Custom Pro is loaded with all you need E-Grip, Cyclone feed, Camo kit 14inch Evil Driver barrel, 20oz c02, parts kit, 2 O-Ring kits Quick load hopper X-7 style gravity hopper, BB's. Perfect for TAMA. Asking \$200 e-mail jhgerber@yahoo.com

Miscellaneous 1040

Yokota, Japan - new Jessica Simpson sapphire clutch brand new still with tags on! Add pop to a cocktail dress with this slim little clutch by Jessica Simpson. Made with a shimmering sapphire-embossed synthetic upper, the Sapphire features an easy fold-over closure with secure magnetic snap tab. The checkered-lined interior includes cell phone pouch and zippered pocket for change, tokens and other small items. Whip stitched detailing at the piping and a brushed metal buckle detail on the flap offer textural appeal to this versatile bag. Original: \$70 Asking \$40/make offer please call 702-946-5985

Yokota, Japan - Tippmann 98 Custom W/Rsp. Tri-Rigged! Drop feed, 2 Camera 22 bbl, 20oz CO2, Ricochet 2k loader, 2 O-Ring kits and BBD. Excellent for woods or speedball asking \$150. Please email jhgerber@yahoo.com

Yokota, Japan - Video games, printers, car audio wire kit I have PS3/360 games for sale. I have Computer games for sale. I have 2 printer (Lexmark, canon) and whatever ink is left. I have 2 CD's and whatever CD's and whatever ink is left. I have no gauge power/ground and fuse holder with fuse for a car subwoofer. If you are interested send an e-mail to skip592@hotmail.com

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Fri., March 13: 11:00am - 7:00pm
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Sun., March 15: 10:00am - 4:00pm

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STARS AND STRIPES®

A WEEKLY LOOK

RACING STRIPES AT MOTORSPORTS

Looking to rebound

Johnson trying to make up for slow start

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. Jimmie Johnson can be a bit of a klutz outside his race car, but the three-time defending NASCAR champion is typically flawless when he's in it.

So it was a bit bizarre to see a series of errors derail his run in Las Vegas on Sunday. Although he led a race-high 92 laps, he nearly crashed into Bobby Labonte on pit road and also overshot his stall, forcing his team to push him back into the box for his service call. Coupled with an ill-timed caution, Johnson fell down a lap and had to drive his wheels off to get back into contention.

Once there, he drifted too high onto the track into an area of dirty asphalt and crashed hard into the wall to bring out the final caution of Sunday's race. He finished 24th.

"My deal was certainly over-aggression," he said. "I was frustrated with the day. I was just driving over my head. I thought I could win the race still and went in there too deep and lost control of the car and spun out. Certainly from my standpoint it was over-aggression."

But that's so uncharacteristic of Johnson, particularly at Las Vegas, where he won three consecutive races from 2005-07.

"You're just trying to go, just trying to win the race, and other times I've been able to dirt track the car around and just have a cool slide that makes the highlight reel, and this one I lost it," he said. "We certainly walked a



tightrope out there in trying to hustle the car and get all that you can out of it, and I just asked for a little too much this time."

That could be because unlike last year's slow start to the season, when Johnson and his Hendrick Motorsports team struggled with their race cars, his performance issues are unrelated to the No. 48 Chevrolet. His cars have been very good through three races, but he's still got nothing to show for it.

He was caught in the Dale Earnhardt Jr.-Brian Vickers wreck at Daytona and finished 31st, but rebounded to cement himself as the favorite the next week at California. Johnson dominated every practice session and led twice for 74 laps, but faded at the end and finished ninth.

Then came the Vegas disaster, and Johnson heads into Atlanta

this weekend ranked 19th in the Sprint Cup Series standings.

"Last year, we got off to a slow start," he said. "It was more of a panic situation than what we have right now because we didn't have the speed in the cars. This year, it's different."

And he's right. Although he was 14th in the standings through three races last year, he had a horrendous day in Las Vegas, finishing 29th and two laps off the pace. It was a humiliating performance that sent Johnson and crew chief Chad Knaus back to the drawing board with their race cars.

Through an intense testing program, they rebounded and rolled to their third series title.

This year, the cars are good, but the performance doesn't back it up.

"We've got fast cars but just haven't linked together a solid 400

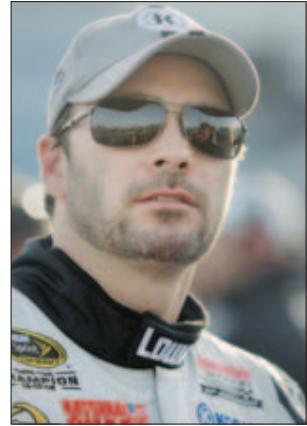
or 500 miles and taken advantage of the great car that we've had," he said. "I feel like we're in a great position, and there's just so much racing (to go). It's only three races in. Guys are going to have bad luck, and, hopefully, ours is kind of behind us and we can climb up the points ladder here."

"I'm not worried. I'm not stressed. I'm actually really optimistic and excited about the next few races."

As well he should be. Next up for Johnson is Atlanta, where he's been very tough to beat.

A three-time Atlanta winner, Johnson has finished inside the top-10 in 10 of his 15 career starts there. And it was there in the fall that he delivered the final blow to Carl Edwards' pursuit of him in the Chase for the championship.

Edwards won the race, but Johnson rallied from 30th-place,



JAE C. HONG/AP

Jimmie Johnson, above and left, has struggled a little bit through the first three races this season after winning the last three NASCAR Sprint Cup championships.

then passed 10 cars over the final eight laps to finish second. Edwards, feeling certain he had taken a huge chunk out of Johnson's point lead, was deflated during his Victory Lane celebration to learn of Johnson's comeback.

Johnson knows Edwards, another three-time Atlanta winner, will be tough to beat. And Edwards is coming off his own disappointing day in the desert — he was running fourth with two laps to go when a blown motor sent him spiraling to a 17th-place finish.

"Atlanta will be a true test," Johnson said. "I look at Atlanta and (Edwards) and how strong they've been there at that track. I'd probably put him as the top seed going into the race. So I'd kind of look at Carl and it would be fun to put the pressure on him this weekend and be the favorite for that."

FAST FACTS

SPRINT CUP

Race 4: Kobalt Tools 500
at Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton, Ga.
3 a.m. Monday, AFN-Xtra

Driver to watch: Jeff Gordon is atop the standings for the first time since Oct. 28, 2007. Of the current top-12 drivers, only five were there at this point last year.

DRIVER STANDINGS

After 3 of 36 races

1. Jeff Gordon	459
2. Clint Bowyer	441
3. Matt Kenseth	419
4. Greg Biffle	419
5. David Reutimann	408
6. Kyle Busch	405
7. Kurt Busch	393
8. Tony Stewart	379
9. Carl Edwards	377
10. Bobby Labonte	360
11. Kevin Harvick	351
12. Michael Waltrip	346
13. Kasey Kahne	338
14. Denny Hamlin	332
15. Juan Montoya	326
16. Elliott Sadler	324
17. Brian Vickers	322
18. Jeff Burton	316
19. Jimmie Johnson	314
20. Marcos Ambrose	312
21. AJ Allmendinger	305
22. James McMurray	305
23. David Stremme	302
24. David Ragan	299
25. Reed Sorenson	299

NATIONWIDE SERIES

Last race: Greg Biffle overcame numerous misfires at Las Vegas Motor Speedway to snap a 76-race winless streak.

Next race: Scotts Turf Builder 300, March 21, Bristol, Tenn.

Driver Standings

1. Carl Edwards	515
2. Brian Vickers	467
3. Greg Biffle	416
4. Brendan Gaughan	407
5. Kyle Busch	406
6. David Ragan	387
7. Kevin Harvick	386
8. Jason Leffler	354
9. Jason Keller	343
10. Michael McDowell	326

CAMPING WORLD TRUCKS

Last race: Kyle Busch led 95 of 100 laps for his second victory in a row at Fontana, Calif.

Next race: Kroger 250, March 28, Martinsville, Va.

Driver Standings

1. Kyle Busch	370
2. Todd Bodine	365
3. Matt Crafton	293
4. Timothy Peters	288
5. Ron Hornaday	285
6. T.J. Bell	285
7. Mike Skinner	281
8. Chad McCumbee	276
9. David Starr	272
10. J.R. Fitzpatrick	262

NHRA

Last event: Ron Capps raced to his second consecutive Funny Car victory of the season at the Lucas Oil Slick Mist Nationals at Firebird International Raceway. Antron Brown earned his first Top Fuel victory of the season in his second straight final round, and Jeg Coughlin claimed his 42nd career victory in Pro Stock.

Next event: ACDelco Gatornationals, March 15, Gainesville, Fla.

Driver Standings

Top Fuel
1. Antron Brown
2. Brandon Bernstein
3. Doug Kalitta
4. Tony Schumacher
5. Morgan Lucas

Funny Car

1. Ron Capps	229
2. Robert Hight	132
3. Del Worsham	132
4. Mike Neff	129
5. Jim Head	124

Pro Stock

1. Jason Line	171
2. Jeg Coughlin	169
3. Greg Anderson	155
4. Mike Edwards	153
5. Allen Johnson	132

FOR MORE COVERAGE:
WWW.STRIPEZ.COM/RACING

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, South Korea vs. Taiwan (did).

AFN-Xtra, 9 a.m.-NBA: New Jersey at Orlando.

AFN-Sports, 10 a.m.-NBA: Cleveland at Boston.

AFN-Pacific, noon-NHL: Dallas at Anaheim.

AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, teams TBD.

AFN-Xtra, 12:30 p.m.-NBA: Denver at Utah.

AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.-Tennis: Davis Cup, first round, Switzerland vs. U.S., singles (did).

AFN-Sports, 8 p.m.-NBA: Cleveland at Boston (did).

AFN-Sports, 11 p.m.-Tennis: Davis Cup, first round, Switzerland vs. U.S., singles (did).

Sunday

AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, Dominican Republic vs. Netherlands.

AFN-Atlantic, 2 a.m.-College basketball: Connecticut at Pittsburgh.

AFN-Xtra, 2 a.m.-College basketball: North Carolina State at Miami.

AFN-Atlantic, 4 a.m.-College basketball: California at Arizona State.

AFN-Sports, 4 a.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, U.S. vs. Canada.

AFN-Xtra, 4 a.m.-College basketball: Kentucky at Florida.

AFN-Atlantic, 6 a.m.-College basketball: Texas at Kansas.

AFN-Xtra, 6 a.m.-College basketball: Big South Conference tournament, championship.

AFN-Sports, 7 a.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, Panama at Puerto Rico.

AFN-Atlantic, 8 a.m.-College basketball: Atlantic Sun Conference tournament, championship.

AFN-Xtra, 9 a.m.-College basketball: Horizon League tournament, semifinal.

AFN-Sports, 10 a.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, Venezuela vs. Italy.

AFN-Atlantic, 11 a.m.-College basketball: Louisville at West Virginia.

AFN-Xtra, 3 p.m.-Tennis: Davis Cup, first round, Switzerland vs. U.S., doubles (did).

AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.-Baseball: World Baseball Classic, teams TBD.

AFN-Xtra, 5 p.m.-College basketball: Ohio Valley Conference tournament, championship (did).

AFN-Xtra, 7 p.m.-NBA: Miami at Cleveland (did).

AFN-Sports, 9 p.m.-College basketball: Syracuse at Marquette (did).

AFN-Xtra, 10 p.m.-Boxing: James Kirkland vs. Joel Julio, junior middleweights, at San Jose, Calif. (did).

All times are Japan and Korea Standard; (did) indicates delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Visit www.myafn.net for more information.

Baseball

World Baseball Classic

First round

GROUP A

At Tokyo

Thursday, March 5

Japan 4, China 0

Friday, March 6

Taiwan vs. South Korea

Saturday, March 7

Sunday, March 8

Monday, March 9

Tuesday, March 10

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Friday, October 8

Saturday, October 9

Sports briefs

Mountain West proposes college football playoff

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Mountain West Conference wants to lead the fight for a major college football playoff.

The MWC presented the BCS with a proposal Wednesday to create an eight-team playoff system that would allow greater access to the national championship game to teams outside the six most powerful leagues.

Commissioner Craig Thompson and four university leaders from the MWC announced details on a conference call and the entire 2½-page proposal was posted on the league's Web site.

"I will put this as bluntly as a I can," said Tom Buchanan, University of Wyoming president and chairman of the MWC board of directors. "We all believe that change is needed. The current system is not fair and somebody needs to stand up and say that and ask for dialogue amongst all the parties involved."

"Our goal is to find a system that is best for college football."

The next BCS meeting is scheduled for April in Pasadena, Calif.

"I would strongly suggest this will be a conversation topic," Thompson said.

Thompson would not speculate how the proposal will be received.

"We have received the Mountain West proposal," BCS coordinator and ACC commissioner John Swofford said in a statement. "Some of these ideas or similar ones have been addressed before in BCS meetings. We will make sure that the proposal has a full airing by the commissioners and presidents, and we will respond to the Mountain West at the conclusion of those discussions."

The Bowl Championship Series last spring shot down a proposal brought by Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive that would have created a four-team playoff.

Meanwhile, fans and many members of the media grow more vocal in support of a playoff each time the current BCS format, which only gives two teams a chance to win a national title in the postseason, fails to produce totally satisfying results.

The conferences with automatic access to the five BCS games are the Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, SEC, ACC and Pac-10.

The call for change comes after a season in which MWC champion Utah was the only unbeaten major team but was never seriously in the running to play in the BCS title game. Florida beat Oklahoma for the championship, while the Utes finished No. 2 after beating Alabama in the Sugar Bowl.

Family rep: Pitcher traded for bats died after party

The grieving family of a minor league pitcher who died six months after being traded for 10 baseball bats said John Odom's overdose came after a night of partying gone wrong.

The medical examiner's office in Atlanta ruled that the player's Nov. 5 death at age 26 was an accident caused by drugs and alcohol.

"John Odom did not commit suicide," a family representative wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press on Wednesday. The person asked not to be identified at the family's request, and said Odom's relatives do not want to give interviews.

"His death is a result of an election night out partying with his ignorant friends that turned tragically wrong. While he made some very poor decisions that night, John loved life more than anyone we've ever known, and he absolutely did not intend to kill himself," the statement said.

The representative said that while Odom "wished the bat trade had never happened, he was making a new life for himself."

Odom, who spent four years in the San Francisco Giants' system, was traded last May 20 by the Calgary Vipers of the independent Golden Baseball League to the Laredo Broncos of the United League. He made three starts for Laredo and abruptly left the team citing personal reasons June 11.

Many teammates and coaches only recently learned of Odom's death. Several told the AP in interviews for a story published Tuesday that the trade, which had gained widespread notoriety, weighed heavily on the pitcher. Calls to phone numbers for Odom's family were not returned as the story was reported.

Shaq reacts strongly to Van Gundy flop comment

MIAMI — Shaquille O'Neal flopped against Orlando center

Dwight Howard. Now he's standing up to Magic coach Stan Van Gundy.

Responding to Van Gundy's reaction about O'Neal's tactics against Howard on Tuesday night, the Phoenix center lashed out at his former coach with the Miami Heat, calling him "a master of panic," a "nobody" and "a frontrunner."

"One thing I really despise is a frontrunner," O'Neal said before the Suns played the Heat. Shaq's first time back in Miami since last season's trade. "I know for a fact he's a master of panic and when it gets time for his team to go into the postseason and do certain things, he will let them down because of his panic. I've been there before. I've played for him."

O'Neal was guarding Howard with about 4 minutes left in the third quarter Tuesday night. Howard made a spin move, O'Neal fell to the court in an effort to get an offensive foul called, and the Magic center easily dunked with two hands.

Afterward, Van Gundy said he was "shocked, seriously. I was shocked and very disappointed because he knows what it's like. You know, let's stand up and play like men, and I think our guy did that."

O'Neal, who typically does not talk before Suns games, didn't hold back when asked for his reaction. He played for Van Gundy in Miami for parts of two seasons and openly complained about coaching decisions in the 2005 Eastern Conference finals, when the Heat lost Game 7 at home to the Detroit Pistons.

"Flopping is playing like that your whole career," O'Neal said. "I was trying to take a charge, trying to get a call. Yeah, it probably was a flop, but flopping is wrong. Flopping would describe his coaching."

Knicks' Eddy Curry counters former driver

CHICAGO — New York Knicks center Eddy Curry, who is being sued for sexual harassment by a man who worked as his driver, has filed a countersuit claiming the man and his lawyers spread details of confidential settlement discussions.

Curry seeks more than \$50,000 in damages from Dave Kuchinsky, his lawyers Leslie Levine

and Matthew Blit, and their New York-based firm, Levine and Blit, according to the lawsuit filed Wednesday in Cook County Circuit Court.

The lawsuit alleges the attorneys briefed reporters on settlement talks that were supposed to remain private. The leaked details, which included that Kuchinsky's attorneys challenged Curry to take a lie detector test, have "negatively impacted (Curry's) future NBA employment and endorsements," according to the lawsuit.

Levine and Blit did not immediately return telephone messages left by the Associated Press after business hours.

Curry also wants a judge to order Kuchinsky and his lawyers not to discuss the case publicly.

Kuchinsky sued in U.S. District Court in Manhattan in January, contending Curry owes him \$98,000 in back pay and expenses, exposed himself and referred to his Jewish heritage in a derogatory way, calling him a "cracker," "white slave," "white devil" and "grandmaster of the KKK."

Curry has denied the accusations and portrayed the lawsuit against him as a desperate ploy for money by Kuchinsky, who was his employee for three years ending last October.

Suns sign forward Swift for rest of season

MIAMI — Forward Stromile Swift signed a free-agent contract with Phoenix on Wednesday for the remainder of the season, giving the Suns another big man to replace the injured Amare Stoudemire.

Swift was in uniform Wednesday night when the Suns visited the Miami Heat, but did not play.

Swift was waived earlier this week by the New Jersey Nets. The nine-year veteran averaged only 3.8 points in six games with the Nets this season, but the former LSU standout could be vital to Phoenix, which may be without Stoudemire (eye surgery) for the remainder of the season.

Heat add guard Luther Head

MIAMI — Seeking backcourt help going into the playoff run, the Miami Heat signed combo guard Luther Head on Wednesday for the remainder of the season.

Head was waived Monday by the Houston Rockets, for whom he

played 255 games in his first four NBA seasons. He took a physical Wednesday morning, then signed later in the day. He was not with the Heat on Wednesday night for their game against Phoenix.

About a half-dozen teams were seriously interested in signing Head, but the lure of playing time and playoff possibilities prompted him to decide on Miami, which had a roster spot open to make the move.

Creamer shares lead in HSBC Women's Champions

SINGAPORE — Paula Creamer overcame an illness to shoot a 5-under 67 Thursday for a share of the lead after the first round of the \$2 million HSBC Women's Champions.

Creamer, who finished third last week in the Honda LPGA Thailand after losing the final-round lead, battled through a likely bout of food poisoning to join compatriot Jane Park and Brazil's Angela Park atop the leader board at the Tanah Merah Country Club course.

"For some reason I putt better when I'm sick," Creamer said. "At the beginning, I was very sick, very nauseous. It must have been something I ate."

Japan's Ai Miyazato and South Korea's Seon Hwa Lee finished the round one shot back of the leaders at 4-under 68.

BC trespass charge dropped against Nets' Williams

BOSTON — A trespassing charge against New Jersey Nets forward Sean Williams was dropped Thursday after Boston College coach Al Skinner intervened.

Williams, a former Boston College player, was arrested by campus police after arriving to watch the Eagles play Duke on Feb. 15. Williams had been served with a permanent no-trespassing order in May.

Skinner told police he invited Williams to the game, unaware of the no-trespass order. Police wouldn't say why the no-trespass order was in effect.

Williams was dismissed from the Boston College team in January 2007 for rules violations that included an arrest for marijuana possession in 2005. That charge was dropped after he completed a rehabilitation program.

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STARS AND STRIPES

NHL roundup**Red Wings move atop standings***The Associated Press*

DENVER — Ty Conklin laughed off his last outing, refusing to dwell on one bad performance.

The Detroit goalie was much sharper Wednesday night, making 25 saves to help the Red Wings take the overall NHL lead with a 3-2 victory over the faltering Colorado Avalanche.

Conklin gave up four goals in just 10 minutes of work in an 8-0 loss to Nashville last week.

He simply shrugged it off.

"My confidence wasn't affected, I've felt good about my game pretty much all year," Conklin said. "You have those kind of nights."

Not to mention these kind of nights.

Conklin turned back a late flurry of shots in front of the net to preserve the win. He even had a puck bounce right into his lap in the closing seconds, with Avalanche players crashing in all around him.

The Stanley Cup champion Red Wings won for the fourth time in five games to reach 94 points, one more than San Jose and Eastern Conference-leading Boston.

For the record, they are paying attention to the standings — real close attention.

"You want to try to stay up there," Johan Franzen said. "I think we are starting to play better and better."

The Red Wings were without goal leader Marian Hossa on Wednesday night. He sat out with a sore neck and knee after he was injured the night before in St. Louis when he slammed into the end boards and had to be carried off the ice on a gurney.

Sabres 5, Canadiens 1: Host Buffalo moved within two points of the provisional last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference by cruising past Montreal.

Goalie Patrick Lalime stopped the first 36 shots he faced and benefited from Buffalo's highest score for three weeks.

Derek Roy and Paul Gaustad scored two goals each for the Sabres, and Jaroslav Spacek had a goal and assist.

NHL scoreboard**Eastern Conference**

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
d-Boston	42	13	9	93	217	146
d-New Jersey	42	19	3	87	199	155
d-Washington	40	20	5	85	215	193
Philadelphia	34	18	10	78	202	180
Montreal	34	23	7	75	195	194
Florida	33	23	8	74	181	178
Pittsburgh	33	26	6	72	198	197
N.Y. Rangers	32	24	8	72	159	175
Carolina	33	27	5	71	174	188
Buffalo	32	25	7	71	187	176
Toronto	25	26	13	63	193	230
Ottawa	23	29	10	56	155	182
Tampa Bay	21	31	12	54	165	207
Atlanta	23	35	6	52	191	225
N.Y. Islanders	20	36	7	47	154	206

Western Conference

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
d-Detroit	43	14	8	94	242	189
d-San Jose	42	11	9	93	206	152
d-Calgary	38	19	6	82	207	186
Chicago	36	17	9	81	208	157
Vancouver	33	22	8	74	190	177
Columbus	32	26	6	70	173	180
Nashville	32	28	4	68	165	177
Edmonton	31	26	6	68	178	194
Anaheim	31	28	6	68	182	191
Dallas	30	26	7	67	183	192
Minnesota	30	27	5	65	157	148
St. Louis	28	27	8	64	173	186
Los Angeles	26	28	9	61	164	184
Phoenix	27	31	5	59	159	193
Colorado	28	36	1	57	173	207

Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss or shootout loss.
d-division leader
Wednesday's games
Buffalo 5, Montreal 1
Detroit 5, Colorado 2

Thursday's games
Phoenix at Boston
Calgary at Philadelphia
Toronto at Washington
N.Y. Rangers at N.Y. Islanders
Edmonton at Ottawa
Pittsburgh at Florida
Columbus at Nashville
Minnesota at San Jose
Dallas at Los Angeles

Friday's games
Calgary at Carolina
Phoenix at Buffalo
Montreal at Atlanta
St. Louis at Tampa Bay
Dallas at Anaheim

Wednesday
Sabres 5, Canadiens 1

Montreal 0 0 1-1
Buffalo 1 2 2-5

First Period—1, Buffalo, Roy 23 (Spacek, Connolly), 17:53 (pp).

Second Period—2, Buffalo, Roy 24 (Paille), 2:59, 3. Buffalo, Spacek 7, 9:07.

Third Period—4, Buffalo, Gaustad 8 (Rivet, Afionogenov), 6:10 (pp), 5, Buffalo, Gaustad 9, 11:03 (sh), 6, Montreal, Plekanec 18 (Hamrlik), 18:54.

Shots on Goal—Montreal 18-8-13-39. Buffalo 10-10-7-27.

Power-play opportunities—Montreal 0 of 5; Buffalo 2 of 3.

Goals—Montreal, Price 18-13-6 (27 shots-22 saves). Buffalo, Lalime 3-9-2 (39-38).

A-17,745 (18,690). T-2:22.

Red Wings 3, Avalanche 2

Detroit 1 2 0-3
Colorado 1 0 1-2

First Period—1, Colorado, Liles 8 (Hejduk, Hamran), 3:10, 2. Detroit, Flippula 8 (Kopecky, Lidstrom), 19:41.

Second Period—3, Detroit, Franzen 26 (Lebda), 7:03, 4, Detroit, Draper 7 (Meech, Downey), 13:33.

Third Period—5, Colorado, Hejduk 24 (Smyth, Stastny), 18:19.

Shots on Goal—Detroit 9-15-6-30. Colorado 11-4-12-27.

Power-play opportunities—Detroit 0 of 2; Colorado 0 of 1.

Goals—Detroit, Conklin 23-8-1 (27 shots-25 saves). Colorado, Raycroft 12-11-0 (30-27). A-18,007 (18,007). T-2:20.

Calendar

April 12 — Last day of 2008-09 regular season.

April 15 — Stanley Cup playoffs begin.

Economic fears quash big trades before NHL deadline**By IRA PODELL***The Associated Press*

Some teams faced the NHL trade deadline with an eye toward the playoffs, while others looked to the future.

Every club, however, kept a close watch on the bottom line.

There were 22 trades and a record 47 players moved in the final six hours of dealing Wednesday, but most of the moves involved smaller-ticket items than some of the names rumored on the block.

The global financial crisis reached its peak in the fall after the NHL had most of its revenues already accounted for this season. So the full effect of the recession isn't expected to take hold until next season, which could lower the salary cap and cash-flow in two seasons.

"My sense is that teams — and I know I am — are scared to death of 2010-2011 as far as committing a lot of money to lock up guys," Toronto Maple Leafs general manager Brian Burke said.

The market for high-priced rental players on the verge of free agency wasn't so lucrative on deadline day. Add in the fact that some clubs — such as the Florida Panthers and St. Louis Blues — were close enough to make a run at the playoffs that they hung on to the likes of Jay Bouwmeester and Keith Tkachuk.

"One of the things that was clear, especially today, teams are a lot more reluctant to trade picks and trade prospects," Colorado Avalanche GM Francois Giguere said. "It was a context where we didn't see a lot of players that had terms left on their contracts being traded. I think that's a reflection of the economy."

"A lot of teams are worried about where the cap will be, not next year ... but of where the cap is going to be two years from now."

In each of the past three years, 25 deals were completed — involving at least 40 players every season. This marked the sixth consecutive season that 20 deals were made. The previous record for players traded was 46 in 2003, and the number has gone up every season since except 2004.

Bouwmeester drew a lot of interest, but Florida general manager Jacques Martin wasn't satisfied with the proposals. The Panthers are sixth in the East.

"They were offers that didn't fulfill our needs," Martin said.

"I wanted two players in return, a defenseman who could play in our top four. Some teams thought their defense could play in our top four. Obviously, I didn't."

As far as marquee value, Bill Guerin was the biggest name that changed addresses. After being in trade limbo since Saturday when the Islanders yanked him out of the lineup, the 38-year-old former New York captain waived his no-trade clause and was dealt to Pittsburgh.

Now instead of being part of a youth movement, that so far has landed the Islanders at the bottom of the standings, he can be part of the Penguins' playoff push on a line with Sidney Crosby. All Pittsburgh paid was a conditional draft pick that won't be any higher than a third-rounder.

Guerin was the Islanders' second-leading scorer with 36 points in 61 games.

"I think it's worth a chance with a Billy Guerin, that playing with good players he will be able to score goals," Penguins general manager Ray Shero said.

The Phoenix Coyotes, who have dealt with questions surrounding team finances during a season in which they dropped into last place in the Pacific Division, stripped down their roster.

Shipped out from coach Wayne Gretzky's club were leading forward Olli Jokinen, defenseman Derek Morris, enforcer Daniel Carcillo and goalie Mikael Tellqvist.

Morris, due to be an unrestricted free agent after the season, was traded to the New York Rangers for young forwards Petr Prucha and Nigel Dawes and veteran defenseman Dmitri Kalinin, who also can be unrestricted.

Jokinen, Phoenix's second-leading scorer, was dealt to Northwest Division-leading Calgary along with a third-round draft pick for center Matthew Lombardi, right wing Brandon Prust and a conditional first-round pick. Carcillo headed to Philadelphia for forward Scottie Upshall and a 2011 second-round draft pick, and Tellqvist moved on to Buffalo for a fourth-round draft pick in 2010.

"This is always one of the hardest days," Coyotes captain Shane Doan said. "You lose friends, teammates, people you know and that you care about. I wish it never had to happen, but at the same time I'm excited about the guys coming in."

Trio: Rookies still adjusting to Sprint Cup complexities**TRIO, FROM BACK PAGE**

After the first three races of 2009, the rookie race is a toss-up between Logano and Speed, with the teen leading 32-31 after being the top finishing rookie in the last two races. Papis brings up the rear with 9 points, but hopes to qualify for Sunday's race at Atlanta and cut into the margin.

It hasn't been an easy transition for Logano, either, but he is improving each week.

After crashing and finishing last in the Daytona 500, the youngster finished 26th at California and then moved up to 13th at

Las Vegas.

"I look at myself and say, 'Hey, I probably could have got a top-10,' but that's part of being a rookie and I learned from it," Logano said. "I feel like I'm getting better and I'm learning every weekend so much, and it's helping me so much."

"The last two races, we were good by the end of the race. We've got to kind of work on getting good earlier. But I'm definitely getting more comfortable in these cars. It just takes time. ... By no means are we there yet, but we're getting closer."

Speed has finishes of 35th, 41st and 21st and is still trying to figure out how to make

his No. 82 Red Bull Racing Toyota better each week.

"Where I need to work is to be able to figure out what the car needs and wants," Speed said. "But, honestly, having the car bad and making it better gives me a better idea of what does what on the car, so [Sunday] was a good day. We learned a lot."

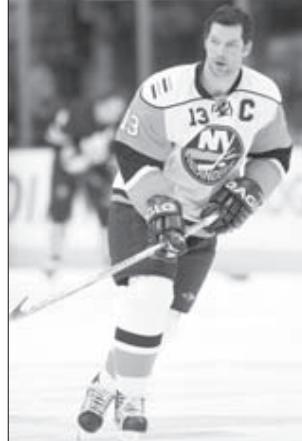
While it's early in the season and none of the trio is thinking much about rookie of the year, they agree it would be an honor worth taking.

"If I win it, it means we've had a pretty good season and we've beaten a couple of real good drivers," Logano said.

Speed said, "I don't think about those things very much, but people keep asking me about it and it would be great to be on the list with some of the great drivers who won it before."

Papis said he can't afford to think that far ahead.

"What we have to do now is make sure we qualify for every race we're in and get the most out of the car and our time on the track each week," he said. "If things go well, maybe we can go for it at the end of the year. It would be fun — especially since nobody expects us to do it."



THE CANADIAN PRESS, ADRIAN WYLD/AP

MLB briefs

Dodgers get their Manny in wee hours of morning

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Manny Ramirez clambered up the stairs to a rooftop patio jammed with reporters, team employees and television cameras.

"Why such a big deal?" he said with a grin. "I played here before."

One day after agreeing to a \$45 million, two-year deal, baseball's slugging clown prince arrived at the Los Angeles Dodgers' spring training headquarters Thursday morning.

With the Dodgers' new Camelback Ranch ballpark providing a backdrop, Ramirez declared that he was looking forward to his first full season in Los Angeles.

"I'm baaaaack!" Ramirez said.

Asked when he might make his first spring training appearance, Ramirez replied, "I'm going to take it slow. ... I've got to get my Gold Glove ready, I'm pretty sure, you know that. I've got to save my cannon for the season."

The Dodgers got their Manny, and all it took after weeks of wrangling was an early morning get-together at owner Frank McCourt's house.

"It's better late than never," said Ramirez, who can void the second year of the deal and again become a free agent. "It was a bad economy. I got a great contract."

The stalemate ended during a 6 a.m. meeting Wednesday at McCourt's Malibu home. The session came after weeks of protracted negotiations that included starts, stops, offers and subsequent rejections.

At times, McCourt's frustration with Scott Boras surfaced, with the owner describing Ramirez's agent as "challenging to work with."

But all that was forgotten when the parties met face-to-face, with general manager Ned Colletti and manager Joe Torre calling the gathering comfortable.

Ramirez gets \$10 million this year, and \$15 million in deferred money with no interest. A plan the sides discussed would have it payable in \$5 million installments each from 2010 through 2012.

If it winds up as a two-year deal, the plan called for \$10 million each season, with three payments of \$8,333,333 each from 2011-13.

Ramirez has until November to decide whether to void the second season.

"Throughout his free agency, Manny directed me to pursue a deal with the Dodgers, and in the final moments it was clear both sides wanted to complete the process," Boras said.

Rivera throws from mound

TAMPA, Fla. — Mariano Rivera threw off a mound Thursday for the first time

since offseason shoulder surgery, and the New York Yankees' closer expects to be ready for Opening Day.

Rivera, who had surgery Oct. 7 on the AC joint in his right shoulder, threw 15 pitches halfway up the mound and 15 from the rubber at 85-90 percent power.

"I'm real pleased," Rivera said. "The big thing (Friday) is how I feel. I expect good things."

The right-hander hopes to make his spring training debut around March 17.

"That's what we're planning," Rivera said. "Every day is getting better and better."

Hideki Matsui, who had surgery on his left knee Sept. 22, returned to the starting lineup for the first time as the designated hitter when the Yankees played Canada's World Baseball Classic team Thursday. Matsui will not play in the outfield during spring training.

Reliever Edwar Ramirez, slowed by right shoulder bursitis, also threw 25 pitches off the mound and expects to have at least one more bullpen session before throwing to hitters.

Shields to start opener for Rays

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — Rays manager Joe Maddon didn't wait to watch Tampa Bay's best pitchers in spring training. He picked right-hander James Shields on Wednesday as the team's opening-day starter.

"Any one of the five starters could be No. 1. It's a tough decision for the guys up top," Shields said before the defending AL champions played Puerto Rico's World Baseball Classic team in an exhibition game. "I'm pretty honored."

Shields was a 14-game winner last season, when he also was the opening-day starter.

But unlike a year ago, when All-Star left-hander Scott Kazmir was injured during spring training and began the season on the disabled list, Maddon said Shields earned the nod because of his performance.

The Rays are scheduled to open at Boston on April 6, with Kazmir, Matt Garza and Andy Sonnanstine following Shields in the rotation.

Indians' Wood progressing

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — Kerry Wood reported no problems with his aching back after pitching batting practice for the first time Wednesday, and the Cleveland Indians' new closer appears to be on track to start the season with the club.

Wood, who signed a two-year, \$20.5 million contract with Cleveland in December, threw his fastball and slider, striking out David Dellucci and Andy Marte.

"It felt good to face hitters," Wood said.



MORRY GASH/AP

The Dodgers' Manny Ramirez, left, and manager Joe Torre survey the scene Thursday before Los Angeles played the Chicago White Sox in a spring training game at Phoenix.

Wood is scheduled to pitch in his first game of the spring Tuesday against the Los Angeles Angels.

The news on Adam Miller wasn't as promising.

The Indians' top prospect is still sidelined by soreness in his same right middle finger that required surgery last year, and he might not be ready when Cleveland breaks camp.

Griffey hitless in Mariners debut

PEORIA, Ariz. — Ken Griffey Jr. went hitless in two plate appearances as a designated hitter Wednesday night, his first spring training game since rejoining the Seattle Mariners.

More importantly, his left knee held up just fine.

Facing Australia's World Baseball Classic team, Griffey, 39, walked and flied out to center field before being taken out of the game as planned by Seattle manager Don Wakamatsu.

Afterward, Griffey tried to downplay the significance of his first game back in a Mariners uniform since 1999, calling it part of the spring training process.

"It was bound to happen sooner or later," Griffey said, adding that his surgically repaired knee was fine.

"Just doing what I'm supposed to. Take as many pitches, see pitches, get guys over, do the little things."

More than four hours before Australia beat Seattle 11-9, Griffey strolled around Seattle's clubhouse wearing dark blue shorts and a gray T-shirt. Notably missing was the bag of ice that had been secured to his left knee recently.

Mixed reports on A-Rod

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Alex Rodriguez has a torn labrum in his right hip, but the New York Yankees think he can avoid surgery.

A cyst in the hip was drained Wednesday, and the third baseman will miss the World Baseball Classic, Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said Thursday.

The three-time AL MVP will be treated conservatively in the hope of avoiding an operation. Cashman said that if surgery is needed, Rodriguez would be sidelined for four months. Cashman said the team hopes the cyst was the cause of stiffness that had bothered Rodriguez and caused him to see a specialist.

Earlier in the day, the brother of the Yankees' third baseman told ESPNdeportes.com that Rodriguez will have surgery to remove a cyst from his right hip and will be sidelined until mid-May.

The operation is scheduled Monday and has a projected 10-week recovery time, according to the brother, Joe Dunand. Rodriguez was to play for the Dominican Republic in the WBC.

"I spoke with Alex and his doctor and Cash today, and we're speaking again this afternoon," agent Scott Boras said in Phoenix. "Obviously, he is concerned. He was playing really well, but it's obviously been a difficult few days for him."

The injury is the latest setback for Major League Baseball's highest-paid player, who last month admitted using banned drugs while playing for the Texas Rangers from 2001-03.

And it leaves a huge hole in the batting order of the Yankees, trying to rebound after the end of their streak of 13 consecutive playoff appearances.

Last year, the three-time MVP was sidelined from April 28 to May 20 because of a strained right quadriceps — his fifth career trip to the disabled list.

New York must replace Rodriguez, 33, at third base and reshape its batting order, in which he had been set to bat cleanup, behind new first baseman Mark Teixeira.

The leading internal candidate to take over at third was Cody Ransom, 33, who has 183 at-bats in six major league seasons.

Rodriguez had been looking forward to the April 16 opener at the new \$1.5 billion Yankee Stadium.

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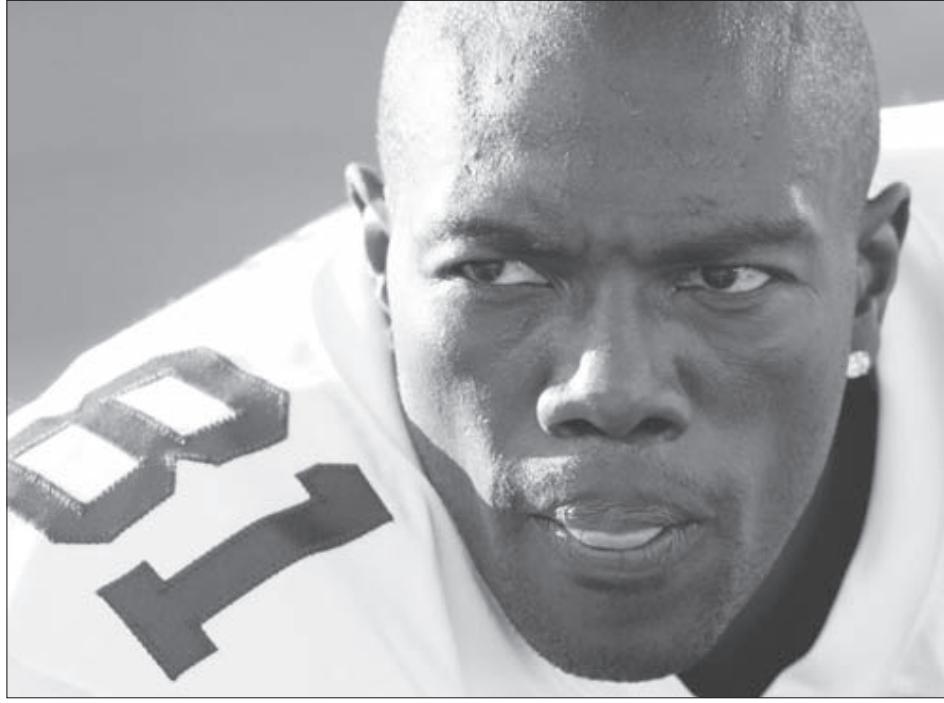
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STARS AND STRIPES

TERRELL OWENS AT A GLANCE

- Five-time All-Pro selection
- Ranks second in career touchdowns
- Ranks fifth in career yards receiving
- Ranks sixth in career receptions.



DENIS POROY/AP

Terrell Owens no longer will be a distraction for the Dallas Cowboys, who cut the talented and controversial receiver Wednesday after three years of on- and off-field episodes, according to a report by ESPN.

Teammate: T.O.'s gone

Cowboys' Hurd says controversial receiver has been cut

By JAIME ARON
The Associated Press

IRVING, Texas — Dallas Cowboys receiver Sam Hurd said Terrell Owens sent him a text message late Wednesday, saying he had been cut by the team.

"He didn't give me an explanation. He just said, 'Wow,'" Hurd said Thursday.

"I didn't believe that he saw that coming."

Hurd said Owens' reaction was "more shock than anger."

"He said it's tough, but it's a business," Hurd said.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones indicated a few weeks ago that T.O. was going to remain in Dallas, where he's had three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons.

Jones' reversal was first reported Wednesday night by ESPN.

The Cowboys reportedly made another, more-expected move Thursday by releasing safety Roy Williams. The team had no comment on either move.

The moves seem to be aimed toward an improved atmosphere in the locker room, something widely viewed as a reason for the Cowboys' problems last season.

A preseason Super Bowl pick by many, Dallas missed the playoffs after losing three of its last four games, including a blowout in the finale when a victory would've clinched a playoff berth.

Also this offseason, the Cowboys have let go of Adam "Pacman" Jones and Tank Johnson.

Owens' personality overshadowed his performance, stretching thin his relationship with coaches and some teammates.

It's similar to the circumstances around his departures from the San Francisco 49ers and Philadelphia Eagles. Without him, offensive coordinator Jason Garrett and quarterback Tony Romo no longer have to think about whether No. 81 is happy.

"I know it takes a lot of pressure off Romo," Hurd said.

"A guy like him demands the ball and you want to get him the ball. Now he can look at all of us and see which one is open on any given play. ... I don't think that was a problem. That's just what could and might start happening."

Dallas' passing game likely will revolve around Roy Williams, who was acquired from Detroit for three 2009 draft picks in the middle of last season. In addition to Hurd, the Cowboys also have Patrick Crayton and Miles Austin.

The Cowboys went 31-17 in Owens' three seasons, but 0-2 in the playoffs.

Jones essentially forced Owens on then-coach Bill Parcells, a relationship underscored by Parcells referring to Owens as "the player." Owens drew attention during training camp by dressing as a pro cyclist while riding a stationary bike, then had an accidental overdose early that season.

Yet when Parcells turned to unproven Romo midway through

that season, Owens sparkled. They kept it up the next season, leading the Cowboys to all sorts of club records on their way to a 13-3 season and a division title. The Cowboys lost their first playoff game, days after Romo and others went on a trip to Mexico, and Owens tearfully defended Romo, saying, "That's my quarterback."

Owens got a new contract last summer, a four-year, \$34 million deal with a \$12 million bonus.

Where might he end up next? That's sure to be the next drama.

He's not likely to return to San Francisco or Philadelphia. Then again, it seemed unlikely he would come to Dallas after having offended Cowboys fans by celebrating on the team's star logo while playing for the 49ers.

Don't expect him in Miami, not as long as Parcells is in charge. And perhaps also count out Kansas City because new coach Todd Haley and Owens hardly got along when Haley was Dallas' offensive coordinator.

His personality might be a fit for owner Al Davis and the Raiders. Or maybe owner Daniel Snyder and the Washington Redskins might add another big-name star to the roster, especially to take advantage of the animosity T.O. might bring to his two games a year against each of the Cowboys and the Eagles.

"I don't think (being released) is going to stop him from playing football," Hurd said. "He's going to be back on somebody's team."

NFL briefs

Ray Lewis will finish his career with Ravens

The Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — The Baltimore Ravens brought back a famous Pro Bowl player and added another one, too.

Linebacker Ray Lewis will finish his career with the Ravens after reaching agreement on a three-year deal with Baltimore, which also agreed with center Matt Birk on Wednesday.

"From beginning to end as a Raven. ... Wow!" Lewis said after concluding negotiations on a deal worth nearly \$22 million. "I don't think an athlete can have a greater legacy than to be able to stay in one place for an entire career."

By keeping Lewis, the Ravens fill the void created at inside linebacker when Bart Scott signed with the New York Jets.

"We got better today. Our football team got better. I am very happy," general manager Ozzie Newsome said.

Birk, 32, replaces starting center Jason Brown, who signed a five-year, \$37.5 million contract with the St. Louis Rams.

Lewis earned his 10th Pro Bowl selection last season after leading the NFL's second-ranked defense with 160 tackles. He also had 3½ sacks, three interceptions and two fumble recoveries.

Lewis has been the dominant linebacker of his generation, an emotional leader in the locker room and a tackling machine on the field. A first-round draft pick in 1996, Lewis was voted NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 2000, the season the Ravens won the Super Bowl, and in 2003.

Birk spent 11 seasons with the Minnesota Vikings after being selected in the sixth round of the 1998 draft. He became a starter in 2000, when he made the Pro Bowl for the first of six times.

Also in free agency:

■ Laveranues Coles agreed to a four-year contract with Cincinnati as a replacement for receiver T.J. Houshmandzadeh, who signed with Seattle earlier this week. Coles, 31, was released by the Jets last week.

■ The Saints were busy, keeping one of their own, receiver Devery Henderson, and grabbing former Buffalo cornerback Jabari Greer. Both signed four-year deals.

■ St. Louis re-signed Ron Bartell to a four-year contract, with \$13.6 million guaranteed. Bartell started 14 games last season, had three interceptions and proved he could be a solid cover cornerback.

■ Running back LaMont Jordan became the latest former Patriot to sign with Denver and new Broncos coach Josh McDaniels, the former offensive coordinator in New England. McDaniels also has lured long-snapper Lonie Paxton and wide receiver Jabar Gaffney from New England, and tried to get quarterback Matt Cassel before he was traded to Kansas City.

■ The Lions signed massive defensive tackle Grady Jackson to a three-year contract. The 6-foot-2, 345-pound Jackson

played most of the past three seasons with the Falcons, starting 15 games last season with 23 tackles (21 solo) and two sacks.

■ Linebacker Takeo Spikes re-signed with the 49ers for two years and \$6 million, who also signed veteran quarterback Damon Huard shortly after being spurned by Warner Huard, 35, was released by Kansas City.

■ Kicker Mike Nugent left the Jets for Tampa Bay, and the Jets replaced him with the guy who replaced Nugent for all but one game in 2008: Jay Feely. Nugent injured his right thigh in the season opener, but the Bucs signed him to a one-year deal to compete with incumbent Matt Bryant.

■ Houston matched an offer from Denver to free agent wide receiver David Anderson, who had 19 catches for 241 yards and two TDs last season.

Raiders remember Cooper

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Although Marquis Cooper spent only two months with the Oakland Raiders, he left an indelible impression that grew even sharper Wednesday as his teammates and coaches pondered his fate.

"His impact on this football team was tremendous, and not just as a football player," Raiders coach Tom Cable said. "The type of man he is, and what he brought to this team, this locker room in terms of leadership. ... I think he was a part of the reason we kind of turned it around and had some success at the end of the year."

"We support the family right now. We support the players on this football team, and will continue to do so until we get some conclusion to this thing."

Cooper has been missing since Saturday, when his boat overturned in rough seas off the Florida coast during a fishing trip with fellow NFL player Corey Smith and friends William Bleakley and Nick Schuyler.

Only Schuyler was found clinging to the boat's hull Monday, and the Coast Guard called off its search Tuesday.

Cornwell back in running

Sports attorney David Cornwell has the written support of three NFLPA player representatives, putting himself back in the running to take over as the union's executive director to replace the late Gene Upshaw.

NFLPA spokesman Carl Francis confirmed Thursday that Cornwell has been added to the list of candidates, which includes Trace Armstrong, DeMaurice Smith and Troy Vincent. The union is scheduled to select its leader during a vote March 15 at its annual meeting in Hawaii.

Cornwell was eliminated as a candidate in January. But under NFLPA rules, anyone can be placed on the ballot with the written support of three player representatives, provided the documentation is submitted at least 10 days before the election.

Far East Class AA soccer preview

Kubasaki boys, girls retool for another run at titles

By DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

CAMP LESTER, Okinawa — Between them, Kubasaki High School's soccer teams lost three strikers who combined for 46 goals and two defensive standouts, three to graduation, two to transfer.

But don't call the Dragons' soccer teams the dreaded r-word.

"Rebuilding" has never been in the vocabulary of a Kubasaki program that has garnered a combined six Far East Class AA titles. Boys coach Chris Kelly and girls coach Terry Chumley insist that this year's teams are no exception.

"I have a good solid core back that will give us a chance to contend, and that's all a coach can ask for," Kelly said.

Kelly's boys won the Class AA title last year, blanking Christian

Academy In Japan 1-0 on a "golden goal" in the second five-minute sudden-death overtime last May at Kadena High School.

Kelly brings back three-year starters Rimar West and Mitch Shibley, plus the core of his midfield and defense and enough new parts to replace departed defenders David Krievs and Class AA MVP Jacob Hess (transfer) and Colton Sadler (graduation).

"As big as they get. Key pieces of our team, I'd love to have those guys back," Kelly said. "But I have people here from last year who will step in for us. It's up to me to reassess, reevaluate and get them going in the right direction. That's the life of a coach."

Also part of a coach's life is getting a team to pick up the pieces after a heartbreaking defeat, recovering from the loss of scoring firepower and getting the team back on track.

That's Chumley's lot, after the Dragons girls fell 1-0 to American School In Japan last year — the first time in the tournament's 10 years that the championship was won by a team not from Okinawa. Kubasaki had won the title the year before.

"I'm sure they'll be pumped to try to get back to the big game," Chumley said.

Like Kelly, who lost a 21-goal scorer in Hess, Chumley waved farewell to graduated Bridget Ramirez (14 goals) and Jessica Osborne (11). But she also retains the same sort of senior leadership — in three-year midfielders Rina Ihu and Sara Harter.

"Our midfield is very deep with experience," Chumley said. "I think we'll be competitive."

Of Ihu and Harter, Chumley said, "They're definitely leading our team."

Several underclassmen have

transferred in and will be at Kubasaki until they graduate, both coaches said. Among them are Nicole Bossert, a sophomore midfielder who started for E.J. King's boys team, and Jordan Beard, a sophomore fullback who'll replace Sadler.

"We have some new kids who will work nicely," Chumley said.

"He's a really good fit, a big, solid defender to fill Colton's shoes," Kelly said of Beard.

What they'll find standing in the way on the road to the title are several title-worthy programs:

■ Island-rival Kadena returns plenty of scoring firepower in junior Stan Schrock (32 goals) and senior Cassie McDonald (30). Coaches for each team say they're feeling no pressure with Kubasaki in the role of favorite. "We're underdogs," girls coach Hoa Nguyen said. "Fine with me," boys coach Tom McKinney

said.

■ The team Kelly's heroes vanished last May, CAJ, brings back all but four graduates, with Kanto Plain career goals leader Leo Kobayashi (82) back for his senior season.

■ Zama American's girls also figure to be in the mix, with the Ashliman sister tandem of junior Aubrey (58 goals) and sophomore Mallarie (43) joining transfers Taylor Russell from Kadena and Katie Scully from Hawaii.

Play begins in earnest in all areas this weekend, and Kelly and Chumley said they were optimistic about the task to come and the players they have to do the job.

"They have a passion for the sport. It shows on the field. It makes it a joy for me," Kelly said. "I think we'll have fun this year."

E-mail Dave Ornauer at: ornry@pstripes.osd.mil

High school soccer scoreboard

Class AA boys capsules

Japan

Yokota Panthers

Yokota Air Base

2008 record-21-5, DODDS-Japan Soccer League champion, fifth in Class AA.

Coach-Jason Leonardis, first season. **Key returners**-Tony Presnell, Sr. midfielder (18 goals, 6 assists); Trey Sauls, Sr., goalkeeper; Chris Cournoyer, Sr., defender; Jimmy Niesler, Jr., midfielder (10 goals, 14 assists); Patrick Tubalido, Jr., midfielder (5 goals).

Key newcomers-Chris Klein, Sr., midfielder/forward (transfer from Florida, Olympic Development Program in Europe); Omar Yuksel, Sr., forward (transfer from England); Keegan Ryan, Jr., defender; Gabe Huizar, So., defender.

Outlook-Rebuilding. Coaching change means an adjustment to a new philosophy and style, but hope is there that the Panthers will compete at least in the DODDS-Japan Soccer League and Kanto Plain Association of Secondary Schools.

Nile C. Kinnick Red Devils

Yokosuka Naval Base

2008 record-5-17-5, 12th in Class AA. **Coach**-Shane Hernandez, third season.

Key returners-Collin Garrouette, Jr., midfielder; Devery Williams, Jr., forward; Seth Bell, Jr., goalkeeper; Lyle Bacalots, Sr., defender; Jay Pothula, Jr., midfielder; Chris Del Toro, So., midfielder; Ryutaro Matsushita, Sr., defender; Kyle Wessels, Sr., defender.

Key newcomers-David Krievs, Sr., midfielder (transfer from Kubasaki); John Bogen, Jr., forward (transfer from E.J. King); Jess Arnold, Jr., defender; Marcus Boehler, Jr., forward; Robert Johnson, So., midfielder.

Outlook-Rebuilding. Will be solid defensively; production up front may be a question mark, although the additions of Krievs and Bogen will help.

Zama American Trojans

Camp Zama/Naval Air Facility Atsugi

2008 record-15-9, seventh in Class AA. **Coach**-Lisa DesJardins, first season.

Key returners-Daniel Dulay, Sr., goal-keeper/defender; Spenser Clark, Sr., forward/midfielder (5 goals); Brittan Southard, Sr., forward (7 goals, 7 assists);

Tyler Myers, So., forward-midfielder (13 goals); Zach Woods, Jr., center-midfielder/forward (13 goals); Austin Woods, Jr., goal-keeper-defender.

Key newcomers-Michael Spencer, So., sweeper/offense; Malachi Cruz, So., midfielder-offense; Adonis Jackson, Sr., wing; Josiah Morgan, Jr., midfielder-sweeper; Desmond West, Sr., midfielder-defender; Patrick Fong, So., forward-wing.

Outlook-Reloading/contending. Good mix of returning veterans and key newcomers to build a solid, competitive team.

Okinawa Kubasaki Dragons Camp Foster

2008 record-12-10, Class AA champion.

Coach-Chris Kelly, fourth season. **Key returners**-Rimar West, Sr., forward (11 goals); Mitch Shibley, Sr., forward (9 goals); Eddie Balfour, Sr., midfielder; Cody Sadler, Sr., midfielder; Jared Knox, Sr., defender-midfielder; Leo Muro, So., midfielder; Zach Stallings, Jr., midfielder; David Osborne, Jr., midfielder-defender.

Key newcomer-Jordan Beard, So., full-back.

Outlook-Contending. As experienced a group as Kelly has ever had, Beard slides into key defensive spot vacated by graduated Colton Sadler. David Krievs and Jacob Hess (21 goals) are gone, but Dragons still competitive, both on island and at Class AA.

Kadena Panthers

Kadena Air Base

2008 record-17-8-1, third in Class AA.

Coach-Tom McKinney, third season. **Key returners**-Stanley Schrock, Jr., forward (32 goals); Patrick Reynolds, Sr., forward (15 goals); Aaron Ahner, So., midfielder-defender.

Key newcomers-Sean Williams, Jr. (reigning Okinawa Activities Council district golf champion).

Outlook-Contending. Enough veterans and firepower return, McKinney as always will rely on contributions from athletes who play other sports and insist the belief that a banner is always possible.

South Korea Seoul American Falcons Yongsan Garrison

2008 record-10-5-3, sixth in Class AA.

Coach-Billy Ratcliff, first season (transfer from Vilseck, Germany).

Key returners-Charles Mills, So., full-back; Joe Han, Sr., midfielder; Matt Nutter, Jr., forward.

Key newcomer-John Clark, Sr., midfielder (transfer from Würzburg, Germany, Olympic Development Program veteran).

Outlook-Rebuilding. Similar situation to Yokota and Zama with first-year coaches, new philosophy and style. Ratcliff finds a young but skilled team.

Class AA girls capsules

Japan

Yokota Panthers

Yokota Air Base

2008 record-15-4-3, fifth in Class AA.

Coach-Matthew Whipple, sixth season.

Key returners-Suzie Sundberg, Sr., midfielder (4 goals); Emily Evans, Jr., midfielder (4 assists); Yasmina Yeager, So., midfielder.

Key newcomers-Mia Angelella, Sr., midfielder (transfer from Robert D. Edgren); Shannon Lowder, Jr., forward.

Outlook-Reloading. Whipple fields a young squad; out of 22 players, 15 are underclassmen, though his numbers are augmented by several skilled, promising freshmen.

Nile C. Kinnick Red Devils

Yokosuka Naval Base

2008 record-9-8-4, ninth in Class AA.

Coach-Nicolas Hindle, seventh season.

Key returners-Chelsea Keolanui-Wilson, Sr., midfielder; Nadine Mulvany, Sr., defender; Brittany Evans, Jr., midfielder-forward (17 goals, 6 assists); Mary Niemeyer, Jr., midfielder-defender; Vicki Hollingshead, So., goalkeeper; Audrey Parker, So., forward (8 goals); Jillian Parker, So., defender.

Key newcomers-Marie Connor, Sr., forward-goalkeeper (transfer from Virginia); Meghan Pomeroy, Jr., midfielder (transfer from Hawaii); Celica Levy, Jr., defender (transfer from San Diego).

Outlook-Reloading. Twelve of Hindle's players are freshmen or sophomores.

though the scoring of Evans and defensive presence of Mulvany give the Red Devils promise.

Zama American Trojans

Camp Zama/Naval Air Facility Atsugi

2008 record-19-5-1, DODDS-Japan and Kanto Plain champion, sixth in Class AA.

Coach-Rogers Pitts, first season.

Key returners-Aubrey Ashliman, Jr., forward (Japan record 50 goals in 2007, sat out most of last season with a torn knee ligament); Mallarie Ashliman, So., forward (43 goals); Kristen Dulay, Jr., midfielder; Yuri Fisher, So., forward (6 goals); Eris Pitts, So., forward; Deanna Polaski, So., goalkeeper.

Key newcomers-Taylor Russell, Jr., midfielder (transfer from Kadena, 11 goals, 11 assists last season); Katie Scully, So., sweeper-stopper (transfer from Hawaii).

Outlook-Contending. Team of experienced yet young veterans must adjust to new coaching style. Plenty of talent here to make another DODDS-Japan and Kanto Plain championship charge, perhaps a deep Class AA title run.

Okinawa Kubasaki Dragons Camp Foster

2008 record-13-7-3, Class AA runner-up.

Coach-Terry Chumley, eighth season.

Key returners-Rina Ihu, Jr., midfielder (7 goals); Sara Harter, Jr., midfielder (9 goals); Cait Frandsen, Sr., defender-midfielder; Maya Lowe, So., midfielder-forward; Gabby Falco, Jr., goalkeeper; Chelsea Bligh, So., defender.

Key newcomer-Nicole Bossert, So., midfielder (started for E.J. King's boys team last season); Sydnie Bligh, Fr., defender.

Outlook-Contending. While much must be replaced, particularly the scoring of Bridget Ramirez and Jessica Osborne (combined 25 goals), plenty of weapons remain for a run at a fourth Class AA title.

Kadena Panthers

Kadena Air Base

2008 record-18-9-2, third in Class AA.

Coach-Hoa Nguyen, 11th season.

Key returners-Cassie McDonald, Sr., forward (30 goals, 7 assists); Ashley Zapp, Jr., midfielder; Tyler Arrieta, Jr., midfielder; Britney Wise, Jr., midfielder; Destinee Ancog, Jr., midfielder.

Key newcomers-Shari Moss, Jr. (transfer from Yokota); Stephanie Mobley, Fr. and Kristie Kariban, freshman (played in island's developmental U-14 Diplomats program); Monica Hayward, Fr.; Madeline Velasquez, Fr.

Outlook-Rebuilding. This is as young a team as Nguyen has had since taking fourth in Class AA in 2003, but the addition of Moss, Mobley and Kariban and ensuring Wise stays until the end of the season will give the Panthers be competitive.

South Korea Seoul American Falcons Yongsan Garrison

2008 record-19-2-2.

Coach-Robert Victoria, first season (previously coached boys teams at Seoul American, Edgren and E.J. King).

Key returners-Liz Gleaves, Sr., goalkeeper; Alicia Turner, Sr., midfielder (8 goals); B.J. Grandy, Jr., defender-midfielder; Kelly Gutierrez, Sr., midfielder; Lee Ann Schade, Jr., defender-midfielder; Sarah Schade, Jr., defender; Coco Stephens, Sr., defender.

Key newcomers-Micaela Crabtree, Fr., midfielder; Sarah Erlandsson, Sr., forward; Emma Erlandsson, Sr., forward.

Outlook-Rebuilding. Much to replace, starting with the combined 64 goals scored by Sarah Eades (transfer), Katie Bolar (transfer) and Erica Anglage (graduated), but enough pieces remain for a competitive season.

Wednesday's summaries

South Korea Boys

Seoul International 2

Taejon Christian International 1

At Seongnam

0 1-1

TCIS

SIS

Goals-SIS, Phillip Shin 1 (1), Eddie Cho 1 (1); **TCIS**, Suh Hoon Kim 1 (1).

Girls

Wednesday's summary

Taejon Christian International 3

Seoul International 1

At Seongnam

2 1-3

TCIS

SIS

Goals-TCIS, Nina Aaltonen 2 (2), Young Chang 1 (1); **SIS**, Jiwon Choi 1.

1 0-1

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NBA roundup

With Boozer back, Jazz fine-tuning

The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — After four months of patching together a lineup, the Utah Jazz finally have some depth, just in time for the playoff stretch.

The Jazz increased their winning streak to nine with a 101-94 victory over the Houston Rockets on Wednesday night, continuing to slowly work their way up the Western Conference standings.

Carlos Boozer had 20 points and 17 rebounds, looking once again like the player that led the Jazz in scoring and rebounding before he was injured in November and missed three months, and Deron Williams had 26 points and 14 assists as Utah's trademark pick-and-roll was rolling again.

"I'm getting more comfortable out there. I'm back with my teammates and we're working hard every day," said Boozer, a two-time All-Star. "Every day is an improvement. I'm trying to stay encouraged about it. I still can't jump high, but that's OK."

The Jazz outrebounded the Rockets 45-31 and went 17-for-17 from the foul line in their 10th straight victory at home.

Mehmet Okur had 16 points and eight rebounds and Ronnie Brewer scored 19 for Utah.

"All of these games coming up are important with how tight the West is, and we just have to keep it rolling," said Williams.

Ron Artest scored 25 points to lead Houston and Yao Ming had 19 points, seven rebounds and six assists before fouling out with 1:23 left. Yao also had five blocks despite playing with foul trouble most of the night.

The Jazz improved to 2-1 against Houston and also moved within a half-game of the Rockets in the congested conference standings.

Utah and Houston have met in the first round of the playoffs the past two years and the Jazz won both. The final meeting of the regular season is March 24 in Utah, where the Jazz have won 10 straight.

"We really needed this game because they're right there ahead of us," Williams said.

Cavaliers 91, Bucks 73: LeBron James scored 23 points, Delonte West had 13 and a career-high eight steals and host Cleveland became the first team to clinch a spot in the playoffs.

The Cavs (48-12) wrapped up their fourth straight postseason berth and improved their league-best record at home to 27-1.

Richard Jefferson scored 29 for the Bucks.

Mavericks 107, Spurs 102: Josh Howard scored 29 points and Jason Kidd hit a three-pointer with 31 seconds left for host Dallas.

Eric Dampier had nine points and four blocks, pestering Tim Duncan into a 7-for-21 night.

Trail Blazers 107, Pacers 105: Brandon Roy scored 28

points, including a pair of game-clinching free throws with 1.7 seconds left, and Portland won its 10th straight at home.

The victory also snapped Portland's nine-game losing streak against Indiana, which had won four straight at the Rose Garden.

Marquis Daniels had 28 points for the Pacers and Troy Murphy had 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Knicks 109, Hawks 105: Larry Hughes scored 23 points and host New York snapped a three-game losing streak.

Al Harrington had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and rookie Danilo Gallinari scored a career-high 17 points for the Knicks.

Al Horford had 20 points and 13 rebounds for Atlanta.

Heat 135, Suns 129: Dwyane Wade scored 35 points and tied his career high with 16 assists, reserves Michael Beasley and Daequan Cook combined to score 55 points, and the Heat spoiled Shaquille O'Neal's return to Miami.

Beasley had 28 points — the most by a Heat player besides Wade this season — and Cook added 27 as Miami had the second-highest point total in franchise history.

O'Neal finished with 22 points and eight rebounds for Phoenix.

Celtics 115, Nets 111: Paul

Pierce scored 31 points and hit a game-winning 17-footer with 20.9 seconds to play to lead visiting Boston. Ray Allen, who tied the game at 111 with a clutch three-pointer with 1:05 to play, iced the contest with two free throws with 7.5 seconds to play.

Seconds earlier, Vince Carter had a potential game-tying drive bounce off the rim.

Carter had 34 points for New Jersey and Devin Harris added 25 points and 11 assists.

Thunder 88, Wizards 83: Russell Westbrook and Thabo Sefolosha made big baskets in the final 2 minutes, helping host Oklahoma City to its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Sefolosha made a reverse layup with 1:47 to play, pushing Oklahoma City's lead to 84-81. A jumper by Westbrook with 33.3 seconds remaining stretched the lead to five and Nenad Krstic added two free throws with 9.5 seconds left.

Antawn Jamison had 29 points and 10 rebounds for Washington.

Bulls 110, Warriors 88: John Salmons had 23 points and Joakim Noah added 14 points and 17 rebounds as host Chicago pulled into a tie with Milwaukee for eighth place in the East.

Stephen Jackson scored 19 points for Golden State.

Grizzlies 118, Clippers 95: Rudy Gay scored 20 of his season-high 35 points in the third quarter and Memphis snapped an eight-game losing streak. Rookie center Marc Gasol had 20 points, along with eight rebounds and a career-high 10 assists.

Al Thornton scored 25 points for host Los Angeles.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	48	14	.774	—
Philadelphia	29	30	.492	17½
New Jersey	27	34	.443	20½
Toronto	25	35	.417	22
	23	37	.371	25

Southeast Division

Orlando	44	16	.733	—
Atlanta	34	27	.557	10½
Miami	32	28	.533	12
Charlotte	26	35	.426	18½
Washington	14	47	.230	30½

Central Division

x-Cleveland	48	12	.800	—
Detroit	30	29	.508	17½
Milwaukee	29	35	.453	21
Chicago	28	34	.452	21
Indiana	27	37	.422	23

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	40	22	.667	—
Houston	39	23	.629	2
New Orleans	37	22	.627	2½
Dallas	37	24	.607	3½
Memphis	16	44	.267	24

Northwest Division

Denver	39	22	.639	—
Portland	38	22	.633	½
Utah	38	23	.623	1
Minnesota	18	42	.300	20½
Oklahoma City	16	45	.262	23

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	49	12	.803	—
Phoenix	34	27	.557	15
Golden State	21	40	.344	28
L.A. Clippers	15	47	.242	34½
Sacramento	13	49	.210	36½

x-Cleveland

Orlando	111	Phoenix	99	
Charlotte	96	Chicago	80	
Detroit	100	Denver	95	
New Jersey	99	Milwaukee	95	
Golden State	118	Minnesota	94	

Three-Point Games — Orlando 111, Phoenix 99, Charlotte 96, Chicago 80, Detroit 100, Denver 95, New Jersey 99, Milwaukee 95, Golden State 118, Minnesota 94

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Three-Point

Service academies

Army tops Lehigh as Navy falls; AFA loses

The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Cleveland Richard scored 15 points and Army advanced to the Patriot League tournament semifinals with a 53-50 victory over Lehigh on Wednesday night.

Marcus Nelson added a season-high 13 points for the fourth-seeded Cadets (11-18), who will play at top-seeded American on Sunday.

Nelson, selected the conference's defensive player of the year, held Marquis Hall, a first-team all-conference selection, to 10 points on 1-of-13 shooting, including 1-of-9 from three-point range.

Zahir Carrington had 14 points and 13 rebounds for the Mountain Hawks (15-14), and John Adams added 12 points and 11 rebounds.

The Cadets led 36-24 with 13:40 to play, but fifth-seeded Lehigh closed within 46-45 after two free throws by Hall with 1:56 to go. Richard then hit a three-pointer with 1:34 left.

It was the third straight year the Cadets beat Lehigh in the quarterfinals, with all the games decided by three or fewer points.

Colgate 64, Navy 59 (OT): At Annapolis, Md., Ben Jonson had 22 points and 10 rebounds to help Colgate eliminate Navy in a Patriot League quarterfinal.

Yaw Gyawu added 20 points, including the final four of the game on free throws for the Raiders (10-19). Mike Venezia finished with 13 points, including going 3-for-3 from beyond the arc.

Gyawu also scored the final points of regulation for Colgate on a layup that put the Raiders up 54-52 with 1:48 to play. O.J. Awworo's layup with 1:32 left tied the game for Navy, and neither team scored again in regulation.

Kaleo Kina paced the Midshipmen (19-11) with 23 points and Awworo had 11.



LASVEAS REVIEW-JOURNAL, K.M. CANNON/AP

UNLV's Rene Rougeau is fouled by Air Force's Anwar Johnson on a drive to the basket during Wednesday night's game in Las Vegas. UNLV won 46-43.

The Raiders ended the regular season on a five-game losing streak, including a 77-64 loss at Navy in the season finale.

UNLV 46, Air Force 43: At Las Vegas, Wink Adams had 11 points as UNLV edged Air Force despite shooting only 30 percent.

UNLV (21-8, 9-6 Mountain West Conference) led only 41-39 with 1:46 to play after Air Force's Andrew Henke connected on two three-pointers. But the Rebels scored five points on their next three possessions, including a layup by Adams as the shot clock expired and three free throws.

Joe Darger and Rene Rougeau added nine points each for UNLV, which missed 17 of 23 attempts from beyond the arc.

UNLV trailed by eight points with five minutes to play in the first half before going on a 9-0 run to take a one-point advantage at halftime. It opened the second half with a 9-2 outburst. Henke had 19 points for Air Force (9-19, 0-15), which has not won since Dec. 28 at Dartmouth.

College basketball roundup

Missouri shows 'em

Blasted by Kansas, Tigers regain roar at home

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Fully dressed but still soaking in the moment, several Missouri players loitered on the court nearly an hour after capping a perfect home schedule.

Who could blame them?

The finale, a 73-64 upset over No. 4 Oklahoma on Wednesday night, was perhaps the most impressive of the 18 home victories. Especially given it that came only three days after the 15th-ranked Tigers lost by 25 at No. 9 Kansas.

"It was a great night for our guys, and to come off a tough, big-time loss against Kansas shows their resilience," coach Mike Anderson said. "It's unbelievable."

DeMarre Carroll had 15 points and 10 rebounds for Missouri (25-5, 12-3 Big 12), which allowed Blake Griffin to get his points while holding most of the rest of the Sooners (26-4, 12-3) in check. Griffin had 16 points and 21 rebounds for his nation-leading 24th double-double.

Taylor Griffin added 14 points and eight rebounds, but the remainder of the Oklahoma roster was a combined 12-for-40.

"No one has come in here and won," coach Jeff Capel said. "So it's one game. Everyone else may be in panic mode, but we're not. We'll be fine."

Missouri entered with a 26-point average margin of victory at home — best in the nation.

Missouri is second in the Big 12, owning the tiebreaker over Oklahoma, one game behind Kansas. The Tigers finish the regular season Saturday at Texas A&M. Oklahoma, which has lost three of four, closes at home against Oklahoma State on Saturday.

"You just look at the teams we've lost to and they're not bad teams," said Griffin, who missed one game and most of another because of a concussion. "I'm not worried about it. Those teams are good teams and we've played well, except for this game."



L.G. PATTERSON/AP

J.T. Tiller had reason to smile during No. 15 Missouri's 73-64 victory over No. 4 Oklahoma.

No. 2 North Carolina 86, Virginia Tech 78: Tyler Hansbrough had 22 points and 15 rebounds and visiting North Carolina stayed on track to win the Atlantic Coast Conference regular season title.

The Tar Heels (26-3, 12-3) lead Duke by one game heading into their regular season finale on Sunday.

A.D. Vassallo had 25 points for Virginia Tech (17-12, 7-8).

No. 3 Pittsburgh 90, No. 13 Marquette 75: DeJuan Blair scored 23 points and the host Panthers overcame a nine-point second-half deficit with a decisive 21-2 run. Pitt (27-3, 14-3) hosts No. 1 Connecticut on Saturday.

Levance Fields had 17 points and 10 assists and Sam Young

scored 18 points as Pitt won its 20th in a row at home.

Jerel McNeal scored 23 for the Golden Eagles (23-7, 12-5).

No. 5 Memphis 69, Houston 60: At Houston, Tyreke Evans scored 23 points and Shawn Taggart added 12 points and 10 rebounds as visiting Memphis inched closer to another perfect run through Conference USA.

Robert Dozier added 15 points for the Tigers (27-3, 15-0), who have won 21 straight games, the nation's longest winning streak.

Memphis has won 57 consecutive league games, 24 on the road. A victory over Tulane on Saturday will complete the Tigers' third straight unbeaten march through Conference USA.

No. 6 Louisville 95, Seton Hall 78: Junior Earl Clark scored a career-high 27 points in his final home game and senior Terrence Williams added 14 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists. The Cardinals (24-5, 15-2 Big East) pulled within one victory of gaining at least a share of the league title by shooting 54 percent against the reeling Pirates (15-14, 6-11).

Vanderbilt 75, No. 12 LSU 67: A.J. Ogilvy scored a career-high 33 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for visiting Vanderbilt. Brad Tinsley thwarted LSU's comeback attempt with a three-pointer that gave Vanderbilt (18-11, 7-8 SEC) a 71-66 lead with 38 seconds to go.

Marcus Thornton scored 18 points for the Tigers (25-5, 13-2), the SEC regular season champs.

Northwestern 64, No. 19 Purdue 61: Kevin Coble scored 16 points and Northwestern (17-11, 8-9 Big Ten) ended the Boilermakers' seven-game home winning streak.

It was Northwestern's third victory over a ranked team this season. The Wildcats beat Minnesota on Jan. 18, then won at Michigan State on Jan. 21. Keaton Grant and E'Twaun Moore both scored 14 points for Purdue (22-8, 11-6).

Jayhawks don't play like champs as Texas Tech waltzes

By BETSY BLANEY
The Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — The Texas Tech coaches noticed a bounce in Alan Voskuil's step as the senior warmed up before Wednesday night's game against No. 9 Kansas.

Voskuil, playing in his final home game, was 9-of-14 from three-point range and scored a career-high 35 points to lead the Red Raiders to an 84-65 upset of the Big 12 champion Jayhawks to end a six-game losing streak.

"It's something I'm never going to forget," said Voskuil, who connected on 10 of 17 shots overall.

"I mean [a] new career-high, most threes I've hit in a game."

He hit the last two shots of the game, both threes from well beyond the arc and near the Tech bench, as fans cheered him and chanted his name.

"I wasn't missing," he said. "Might as well throw them up there. Guess they went in."

Pat Knight, who sat beside his famously temperamental father as an associate head coach the last two times Tech beat Kansas in Lubbock, said Voskuil was hot in warmups. One of his assistants remarked that Voskuil could have a memorable last home game.

"The kid just shot lights out,"

Pat Knight said. "He felt it."

Texas Tech (13-17, 3-12 Big 12) led throughout but fended off several challenges by the Jayhawks, who got as close as 43-41 in the second half.

Despite the loss, Kansas (24-6, 13-2) clinched at least a share of the Big 12 regular season title, its fifth straight and ninth in the conference's 13 seasons.

"I said, 'Hey congratulations, we won the league and got beat by 19' or whatever we got beat tonight," coach Bill Self said. "It's pretty remarkable that a team that could perform as poorly as we did tonight was able to be 13-2, I guess, and clinch a tie with

a chance to win it outright on Saturday."

The Jayhawks close the regular season at home against Texas. Oklahoma and Missouri are tied for second in the Big 12 at 12-3.

"Even if we played with an edge, we probably still would've been unsuccessful because Tech was that much better than us," Self said. "We did try. There was just nothing in the tank."

"I don't mean that in any negative way at all," he said. "We've gone from being under the radar and then all of a sudden people are saying good things about us. Guys were hearing what they're saying."

As for Voskuil, "He was by far the best player in the gym," Self said. "He moves very well without the ball. Always has. Things just kind of fell together for them and they had a great game."

Sherron Collins, Marcus Morris and Tyshawn Taylor scored 11 each for the Jayhawks. Collins had scored at least 20 in the previous five games.

It was the third time in four years that Texas Tech beat Kansas in Lubbock when the Jayhawks were ranked in the top 10.

"It's a beautiful building but there's obviously something wrong with it," Self said, perhaps jokingly.

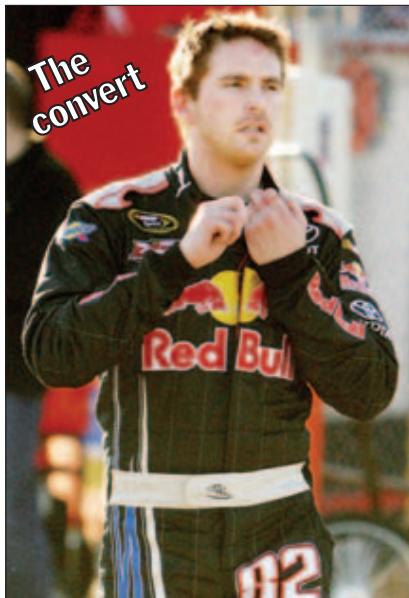
SPORTS



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THREE-MAN RACE

Speed, Logano and Papis take different routes to Sprint Cup, but all are vying for rookie honor



ORLANDO SENTINEL, GARY W. GREEN/MCT

Scott Speed, driver of the No. 82 Red Bull Toyota, was one of the few Americans to get to Formula One, but returned to the U.S. when his sponsor offered him a ride with its Sprint Cup team in 2008.

By MIKE HARRIS
The Associated Press

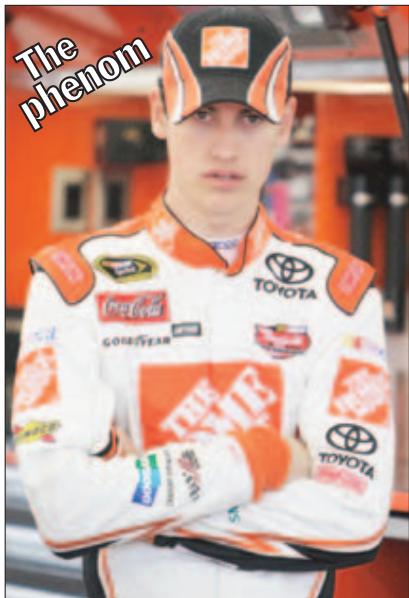
The three-man rookie of the year race in NASCAR's Sprint Cup series this year doesn't appear to be a fair fight.

Just about everybody who has any interest in the first-year drivers expects Joey Logano to come out on top.

And why not? The 18-year-old phenom took over the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota this season from two-time Cup champion Tony Stewart. The much-heralded teen — discovered by Mark Martin at age 14 — is working with a seasoned crew headed by veteran crew chief Greg Zipadelli, and his equipment is as good as anyone's in the elite series.

There would be plenty of eyebrows raised if, somehow, former Formula One driver Scott Speed or Max Papis, another former open-wheel racer, beat out Logano in the rookie race.

Speed, 26, one of the few Americans to get



JAe C. HONG/AP

Joey Logano, 18, took over the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota this season from Tony Stewart. The heralded teen has been groomed for NASCAR's top series since he was discovered by Mark Martin at age 14.

to F1, stuck around the globe-hopping circuit for two seasons, racing in 28 events for Toro Rosso — Italian for Red Bull. His long-standing relationship with Red Bull, which also started a Cup team in 2007, brought him back to the U.S. in 2008 and gave the Californian a shot at NASCAR.

His brief apprenticeship last year included 16 truck series events, with one victory, and five Cup starts in preparation for a full-time run this year.

Papis, 39, has been the ultimate auto racing journeyman, driving Champ Cars, IndyCars, sports cars, trucks before moving into stock cars.

The Italian is the longest of longshots, considering Germain Racing has sponsorship for only a partial Cup schedule, and that is why last Sunday's race at Las Vegas was his first Cup drive of the season. Papis is scheduled to drive in 16 Cup events, the minimum to be eligible to race for rookie of the year.

"I know some people are surprised to see



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

At 39, Max Papis might seem like a long shot for rookie of the year. But the Italian brings experience from Champ Cars, IndyCars, sports cars and trucks to stock-car racing. He's scheduled to run just 16 races.

me here," Papis said before finishing 26th in his Cup debut on an oval. "But I am a race driver and this is what I want to do. I want to give it the best I have and see what we can accomplish."

So far, so good.

Unlike his rookie competitors, Papis is outside the top 35 in car owner points and has to qualify for each race. He crossed that hurdle easily at Las Vegas.

"We made the show for the first time on an oval and it just proved that perseverance pays off," Papis said.

"I think it's a matter of heart, it's not a matter of cars. Getting in the shows has to be the first goal."

"We're learning. It's like I told everyone, we need to keep in mind why we are here. Basically, we haven't been able to go do any practice. We are racing against people that have been doing this for 10 years plus and that's the perspective that you keep in mind."

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Missouri wraps up perfect home season, stunning No. 4 Oklahoma

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Cowboys reportedly cut loose WR Owens

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Boozer helps lift Jazz to ninth straight victory

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